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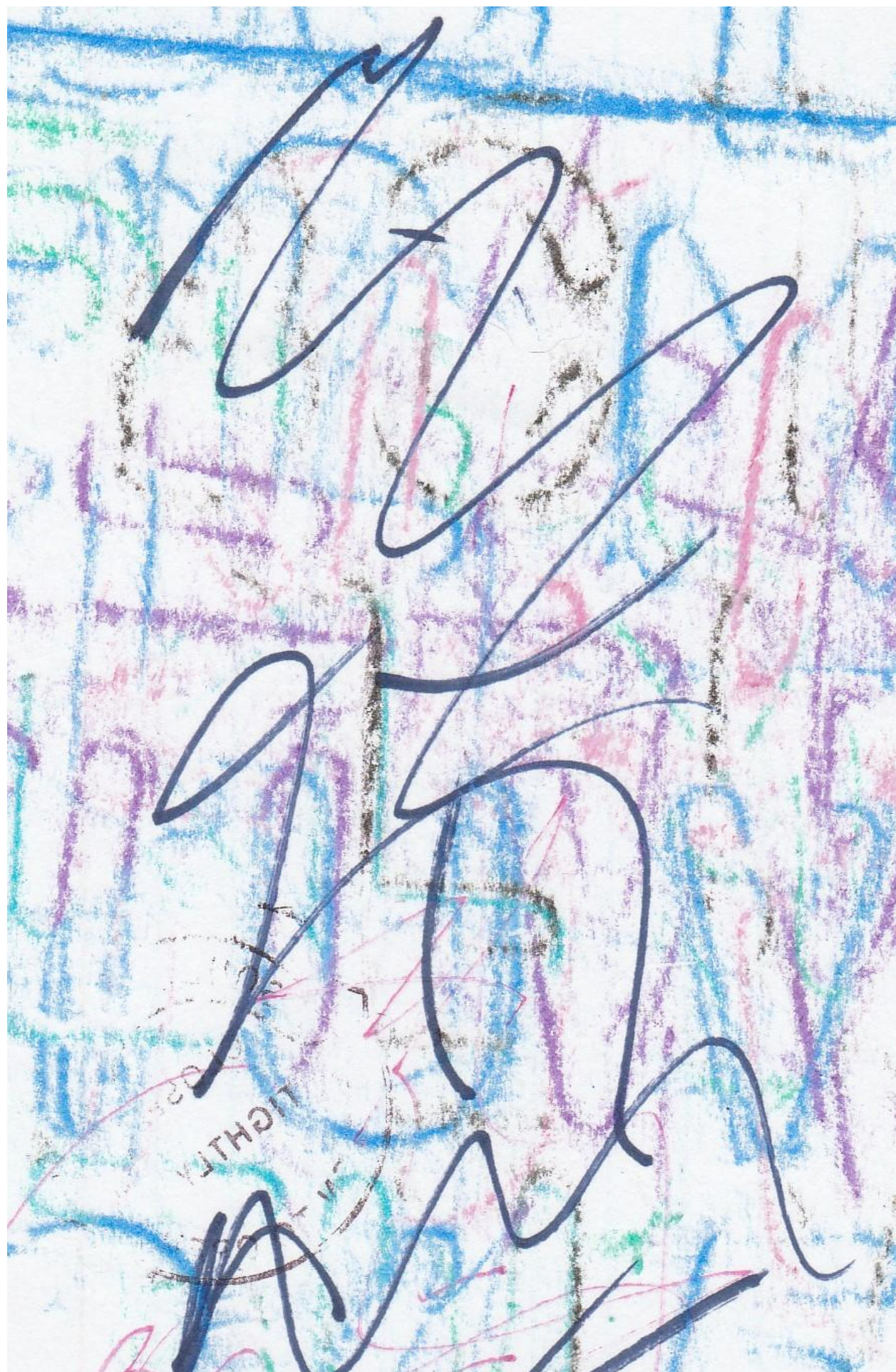
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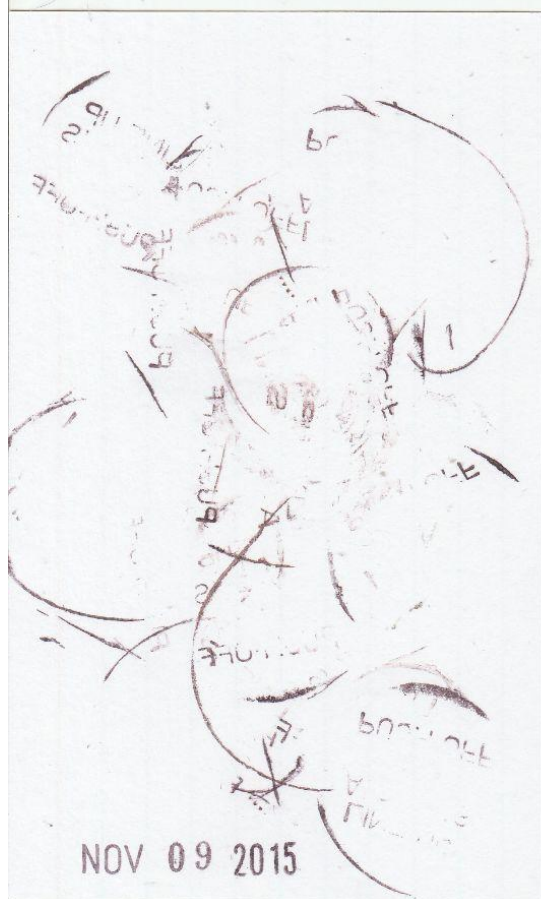
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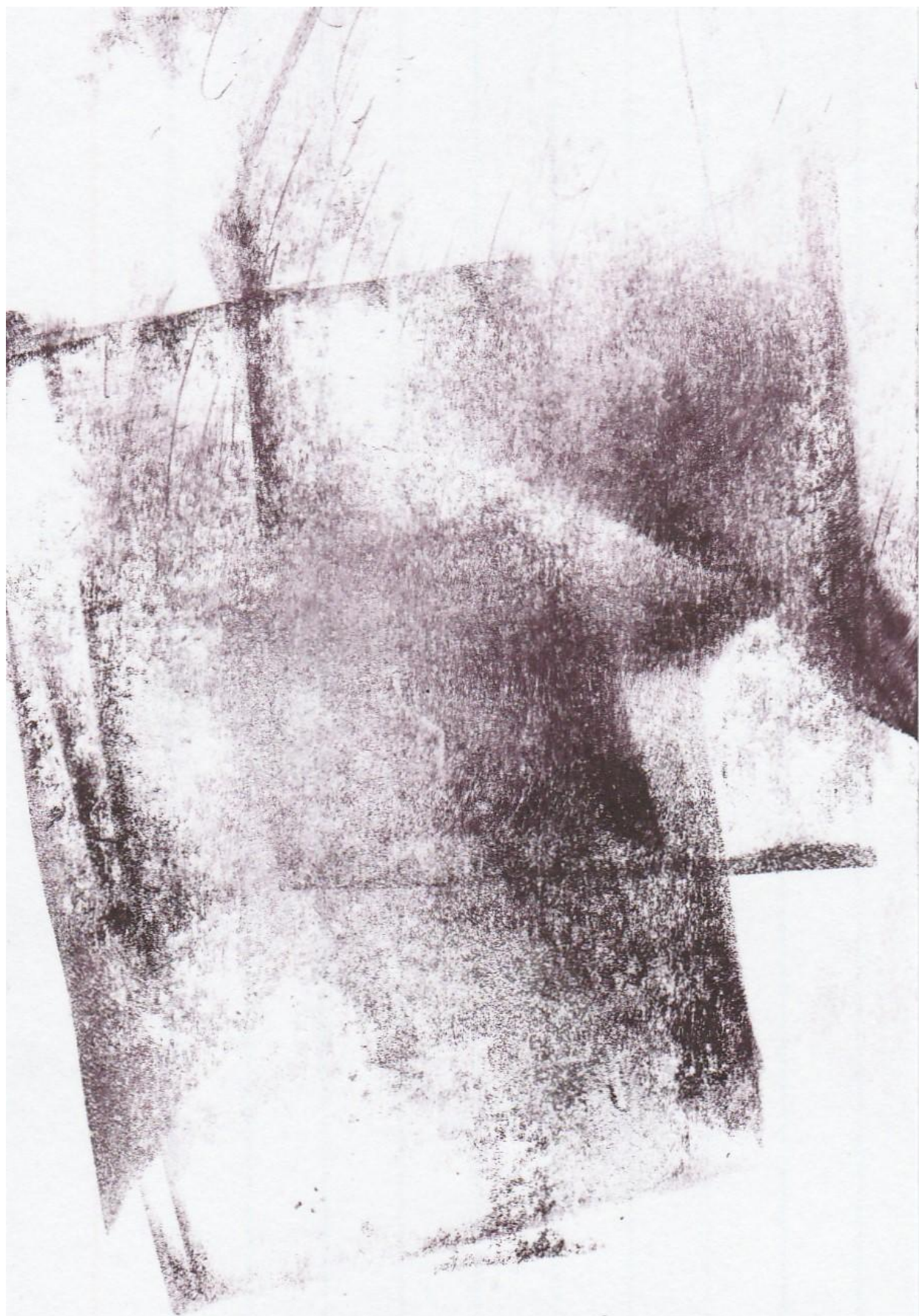
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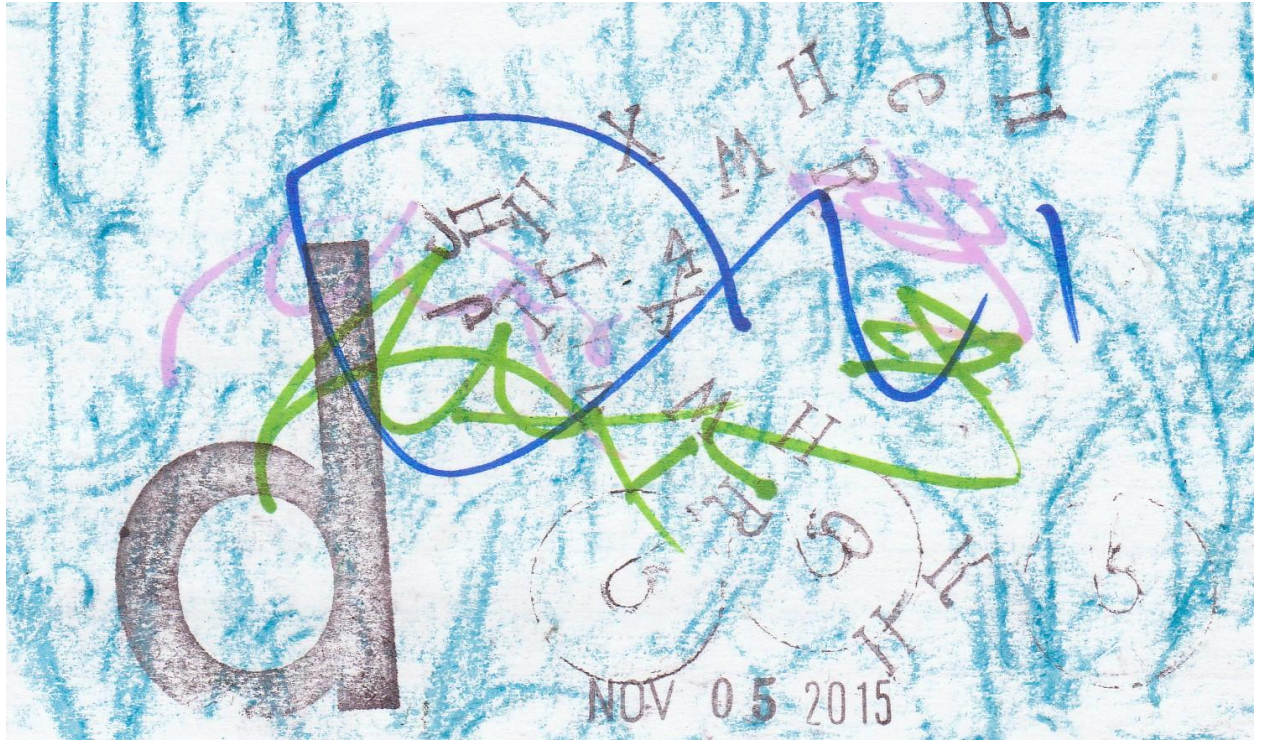






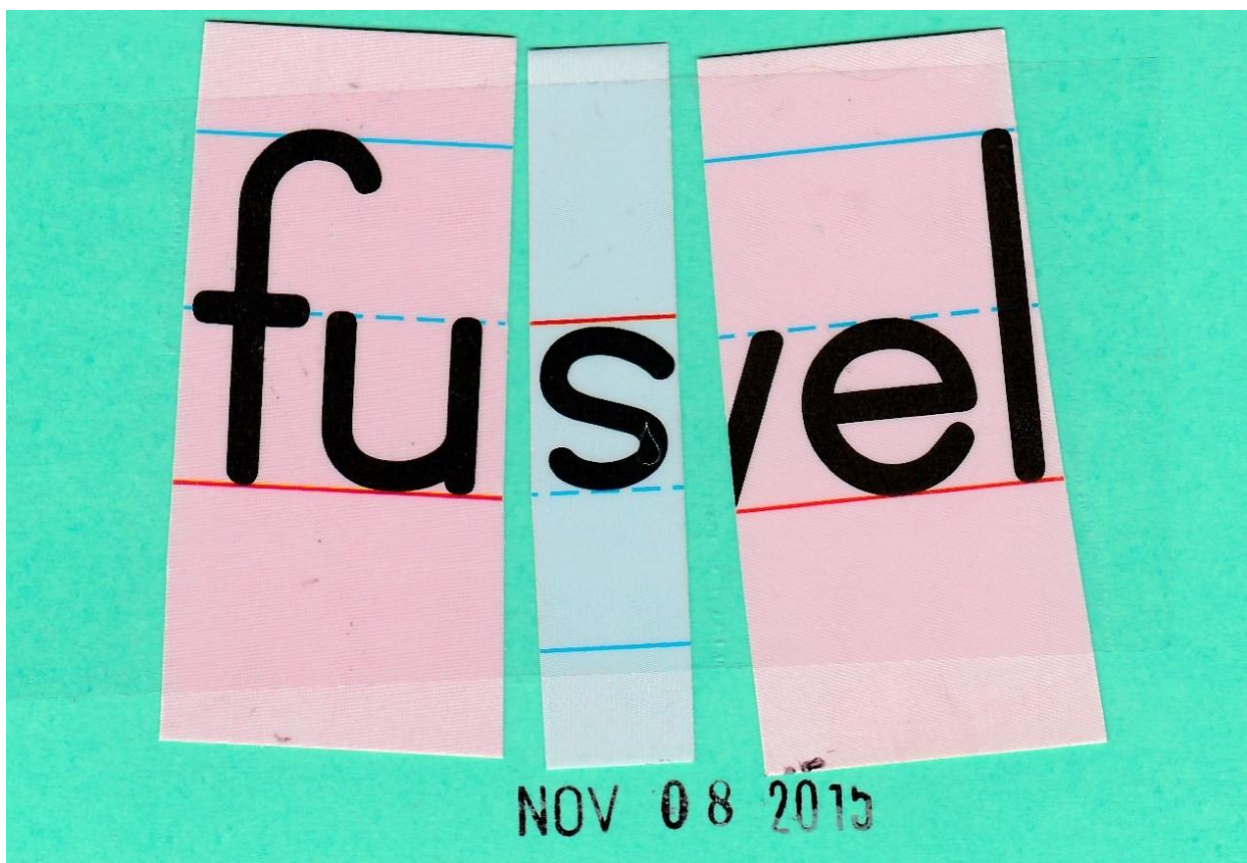
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*The Hostage* (1958). Among poets Patrick Kavanagh's *Soul for Sale* (1958) and *Night* (1958) and *Night* (1958) of subject and style.

Among poets, though no successor to Yeats emerged, Patrick Kavanagh showed originality and realism in *A Soul for Sale* (1947) and *Come Dance with Kitty Stobling* (1960); and Thomas Kinsella, in *Another September* (1958) and *Nightwalker* (1967), showed unusual mastery of subject and style.

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the delicate experimental poetry of Ian Hamilton Finlay.  
Even though the Scottish sense of separateness was too  
real to be overwhelmed, English was dominant in both  
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needed to try many different forms in order to find his  
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#### ANGLO-IRISH CONTRIBUTIONS

At the end of the 19th century a new movement became  
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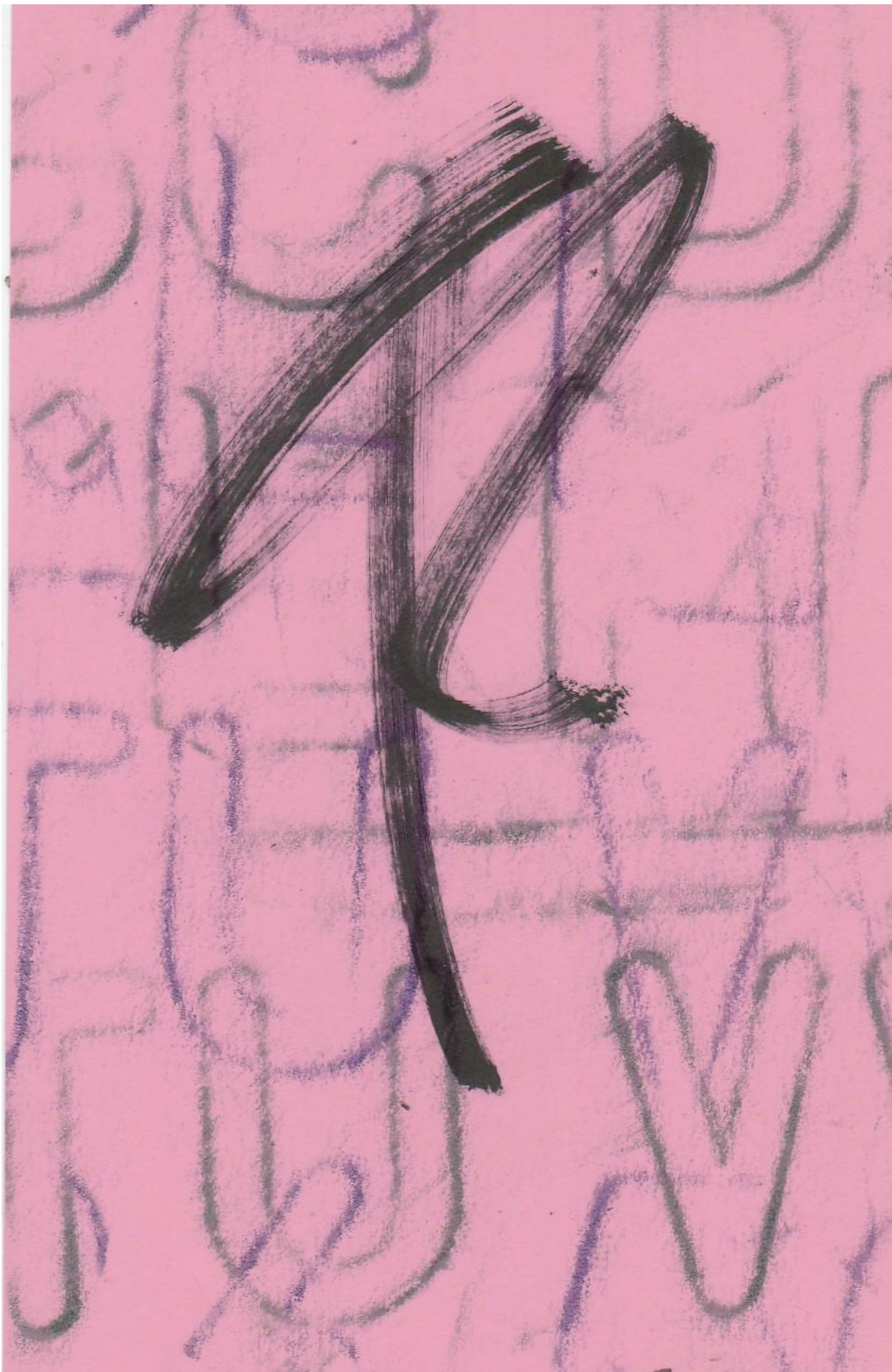
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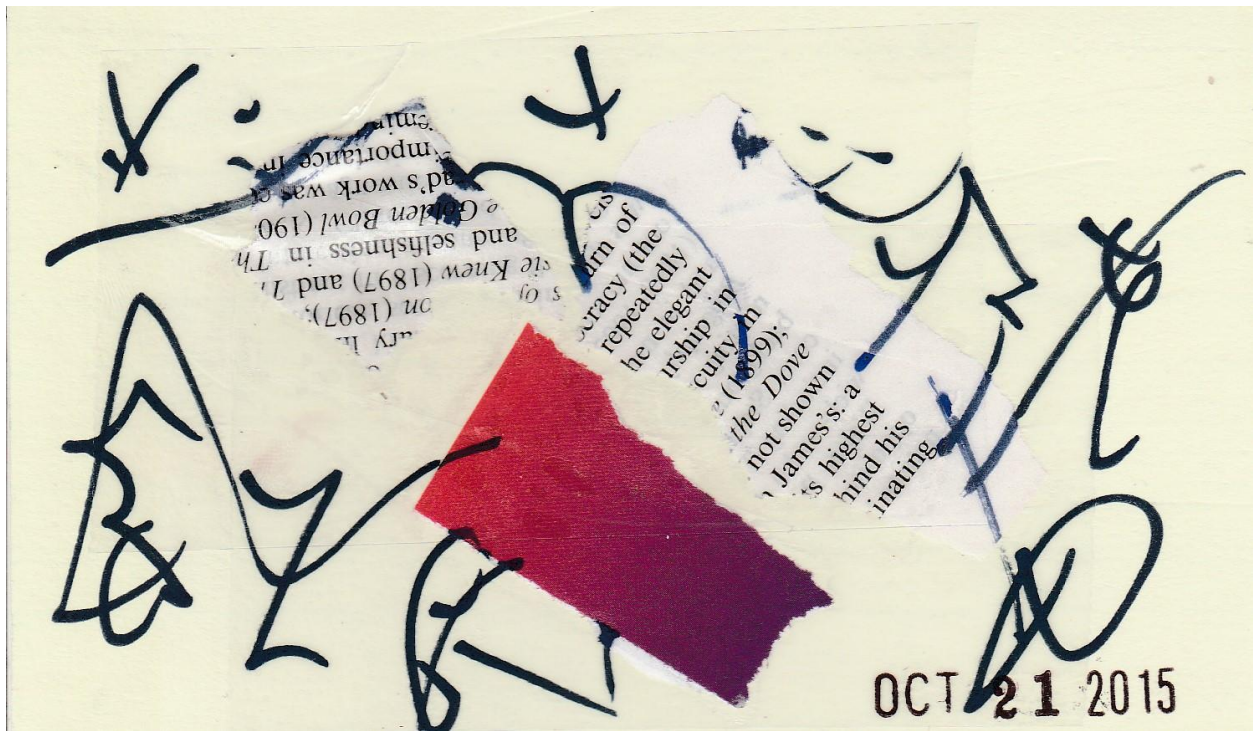
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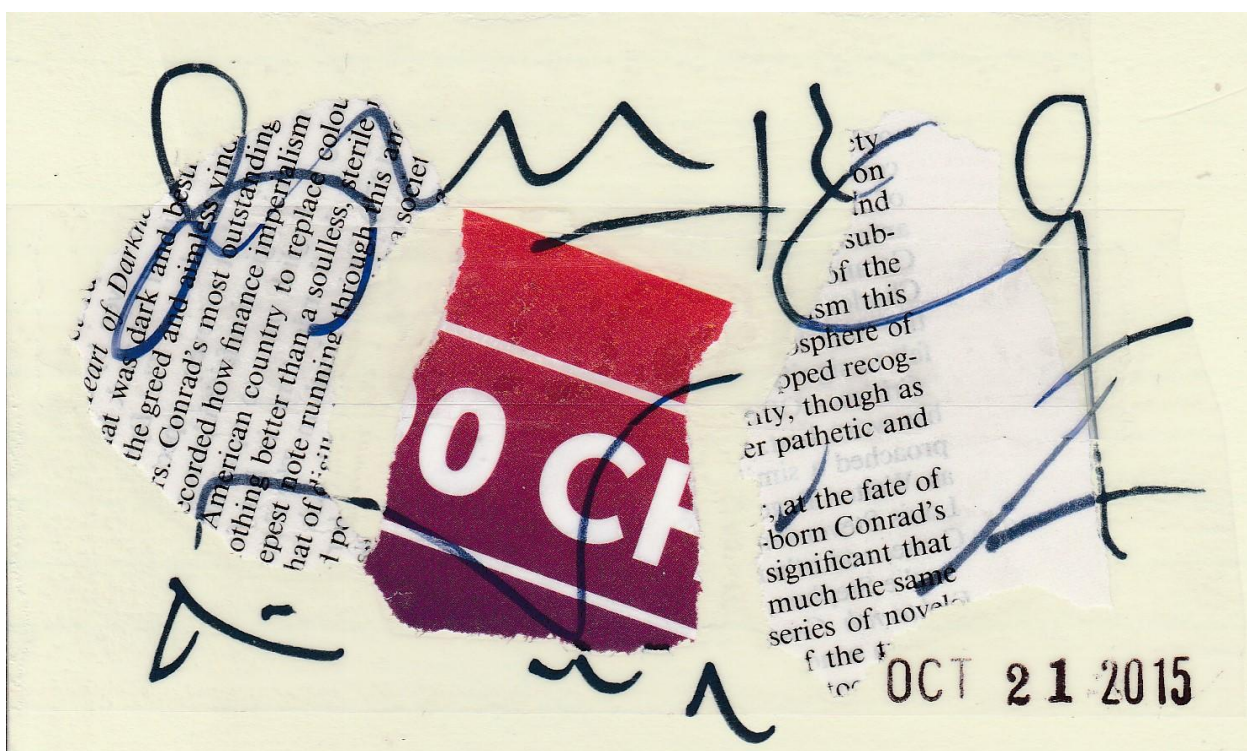
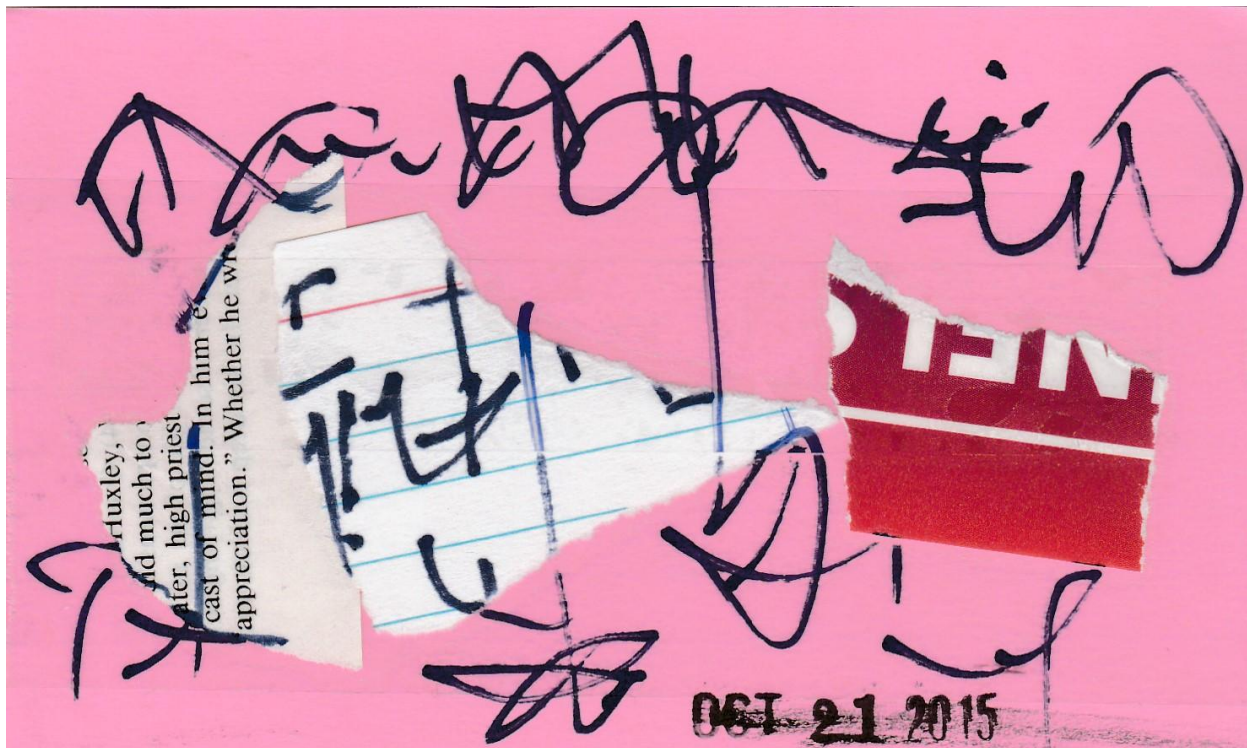






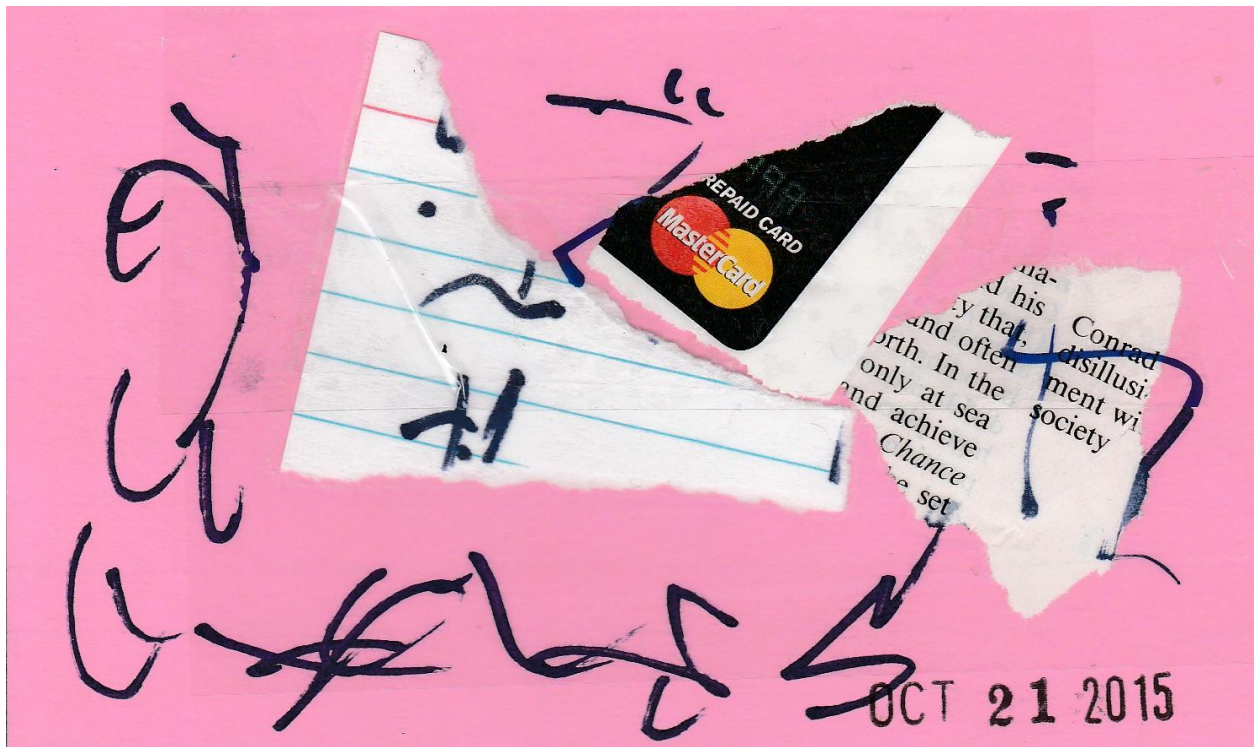




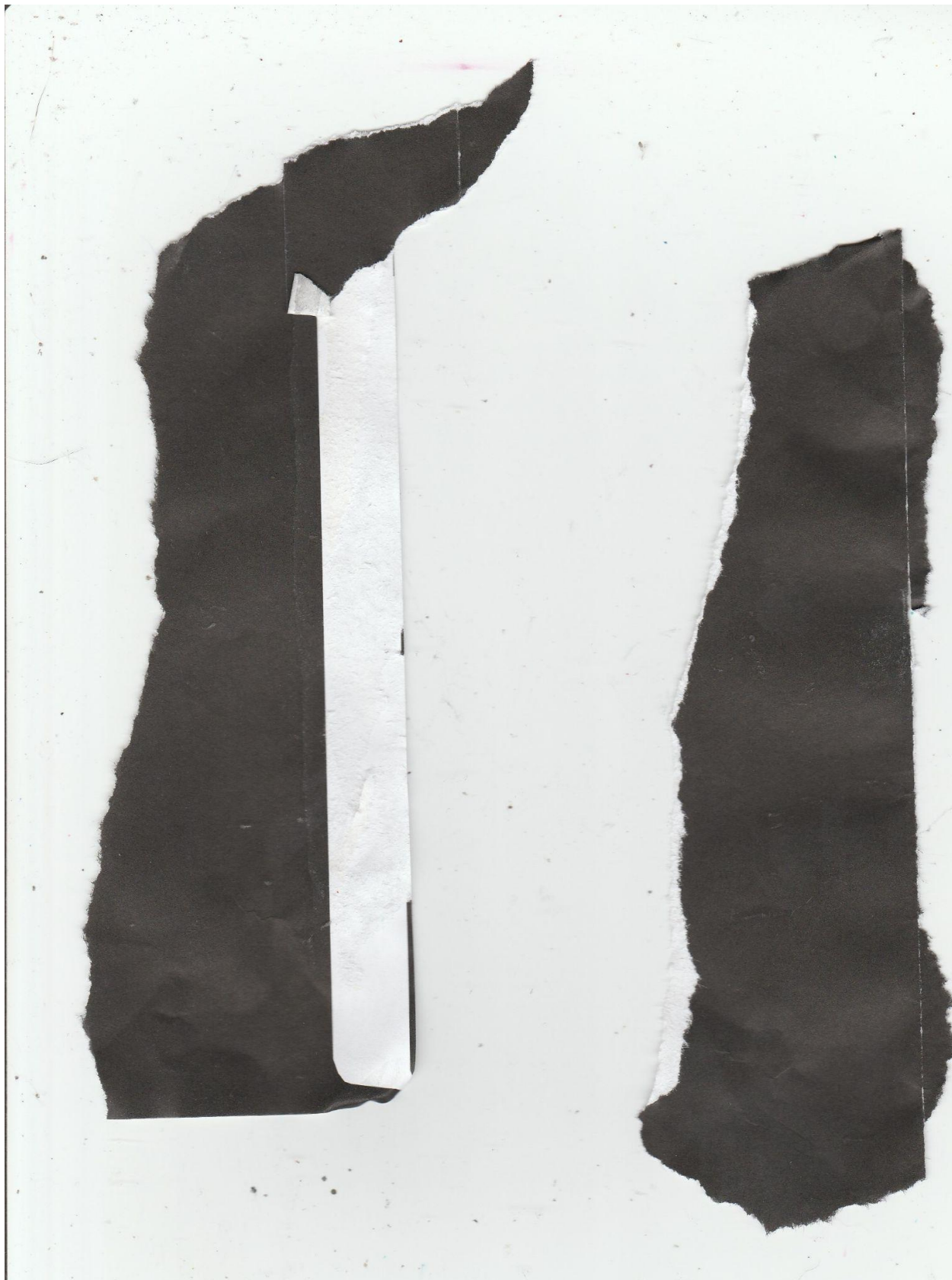














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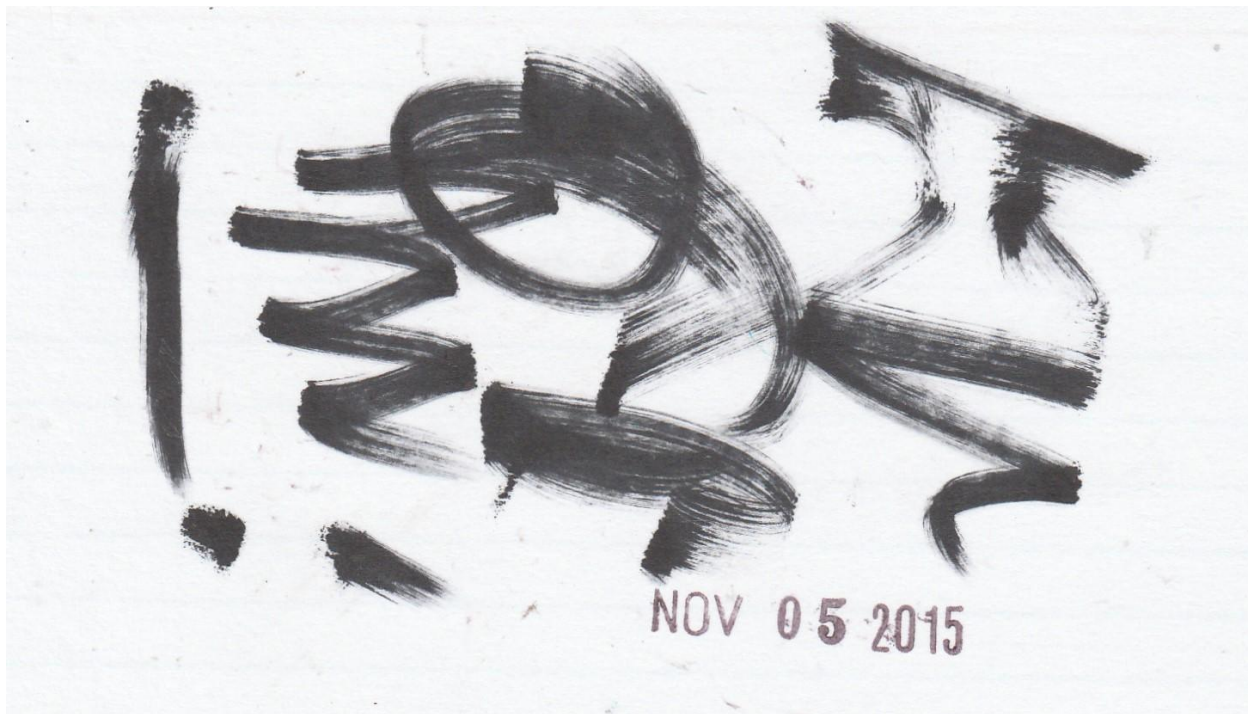
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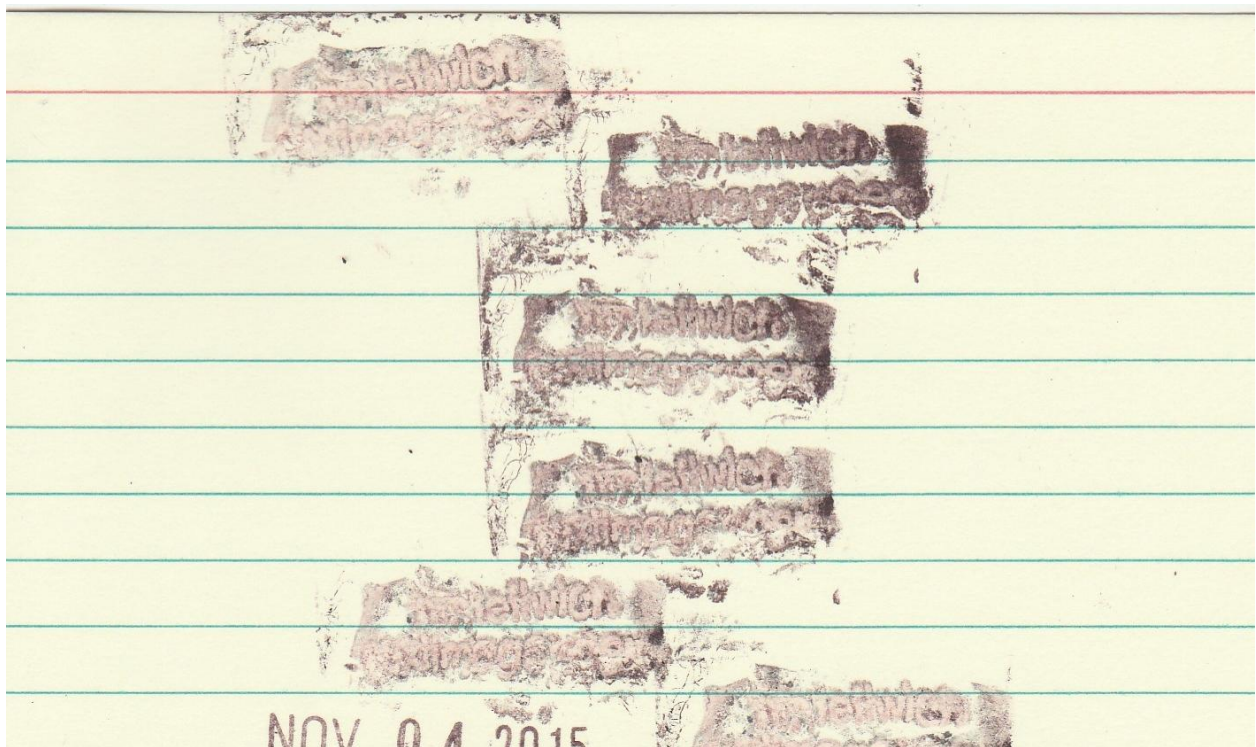
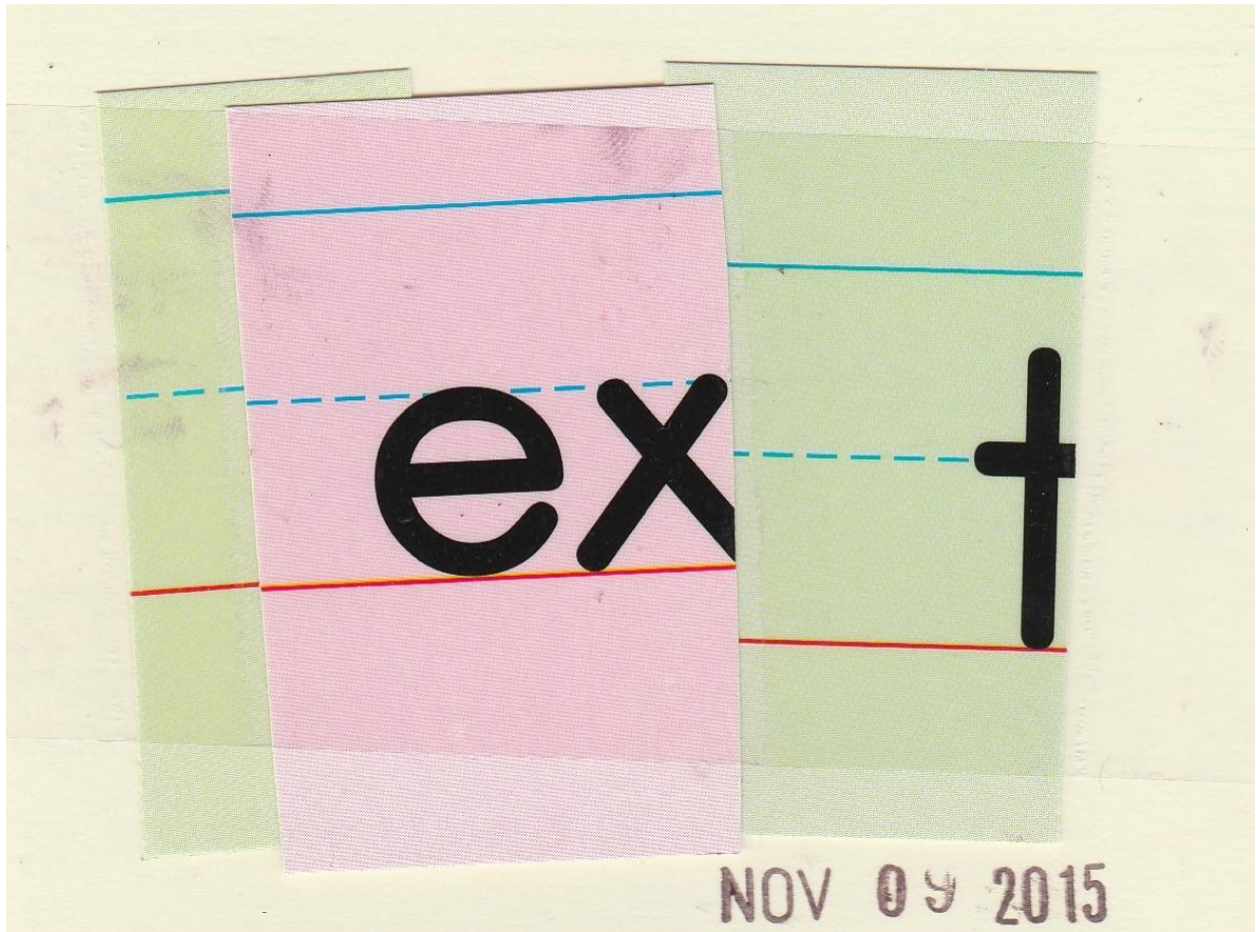


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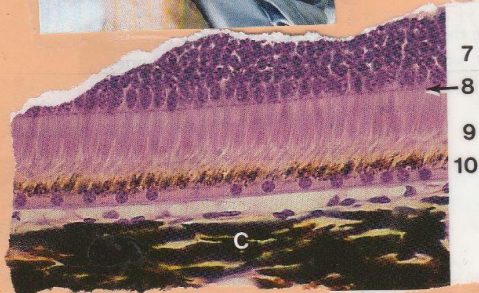
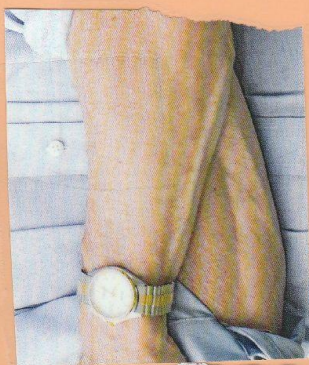
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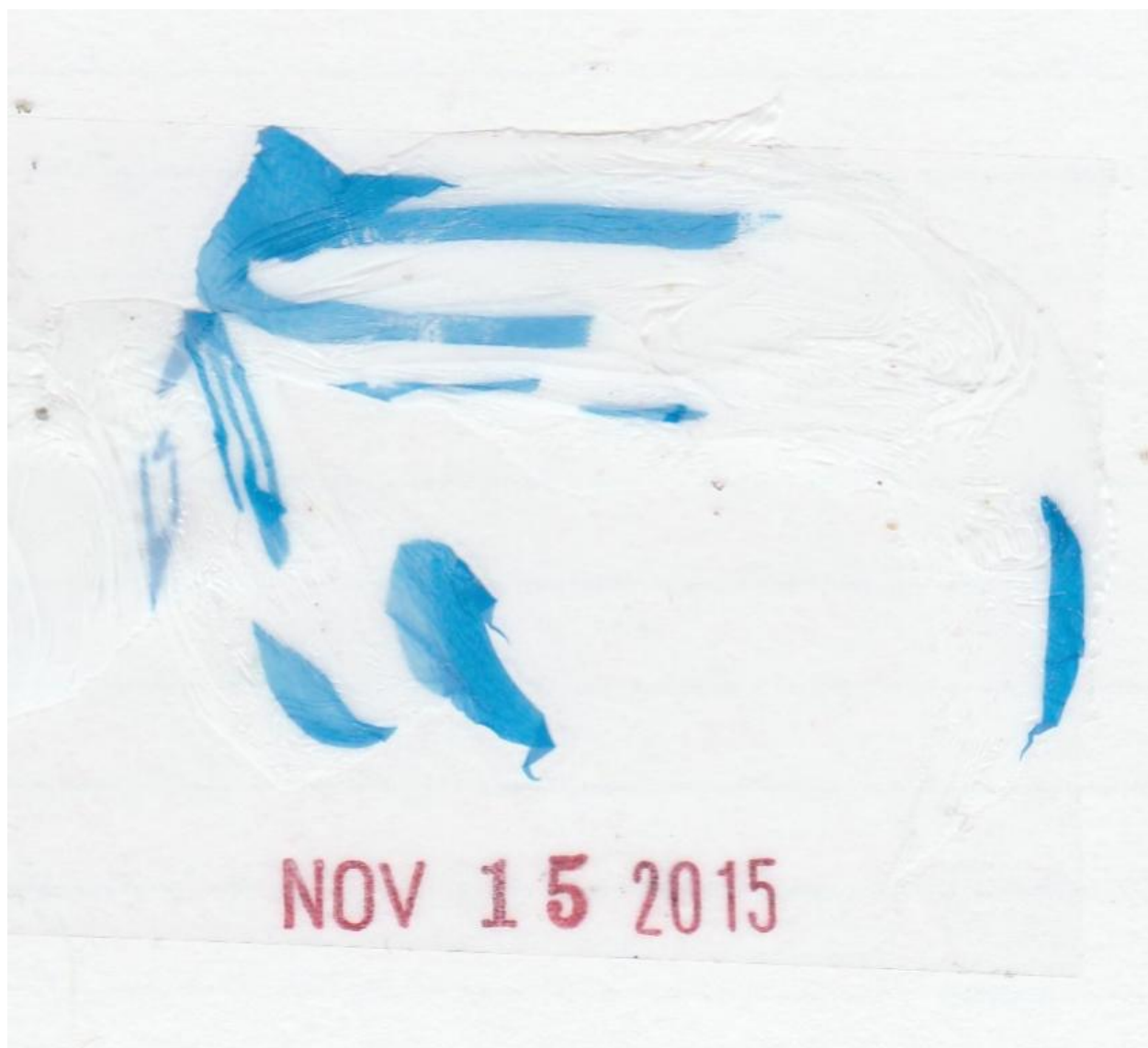
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## English Literature

Like the English language, English literature is part of the heritage of the English-speaking world and has influenced the literatures of countries where English is spoken as a first (or even second) language. This article surveys the literature in English of the British Isles from its beginnings in the 5th and 6th centuries to modern times, and so discusses many literary works by those of Irish, Scottish, and Welsh nationality. The *Macropaedia* article CELTIC LITERATURE treats the writings in Insular Celtic, including Gaelic, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, and Cornish. Major literary works in English written outside the British Isles are discussed in separate *Macropaedia* and *Micropaedia* articles, such as AMERICAN LITERATURE, CANADIAN LITERATURE: English, and AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, LITERATURES OF. (Ed.)

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## The first printing in England

...1470). From sources in English verse and which prose Malory composed a masterpiece of dignified romance and nostalgic tragedy, in a style conspicuous for its sonority of rhythm that yet used the simple language of his day.

The introduction of printing into England in 1476 by Caxton revolutionized the dissemination of literary works. He made accessible to a wider public than ever before most of the important English writings of the preceding century and also published many translations, both by others and by himself. Caxton's prologues and epilogues were livelier than some of the best of his countrymen, for he was keenly concerned to write readily intelligible English, and, by circulating large numbers of books in a fairly homogeneous type of English, he contributed much to the standardization of the language of London as the general literary medium.

## THE NEW LEARNING

For most of the 15th century English literature was closely linked to what had gone before and was little affected by the new Humanism that had arisen in Italy in the 14th century. Cultivated Englishmen were aware of the movement, or at least of its practical consequences, but it was not until the beginning of the 16th century that the full tide of Renaissance Humanism reached England. Even then the effects on literature were slow. An English-making work of English Humanism, the *Utopia* (printed 1516) of Sir Thomas More, was written in Latin, still the language of scholarship. More did write English prose clearly, but it continued the informality of earlier prose rather than imitating classical models. Good English prose was written, too, by men concerned with education—Sir Thomas Elyot, Sir John Cheke, Sir Thomas Wilson, Roger Ascham—and by the Bible translators Tyndale and Miles Coverdale. The educationists, too, became involved in the controversy

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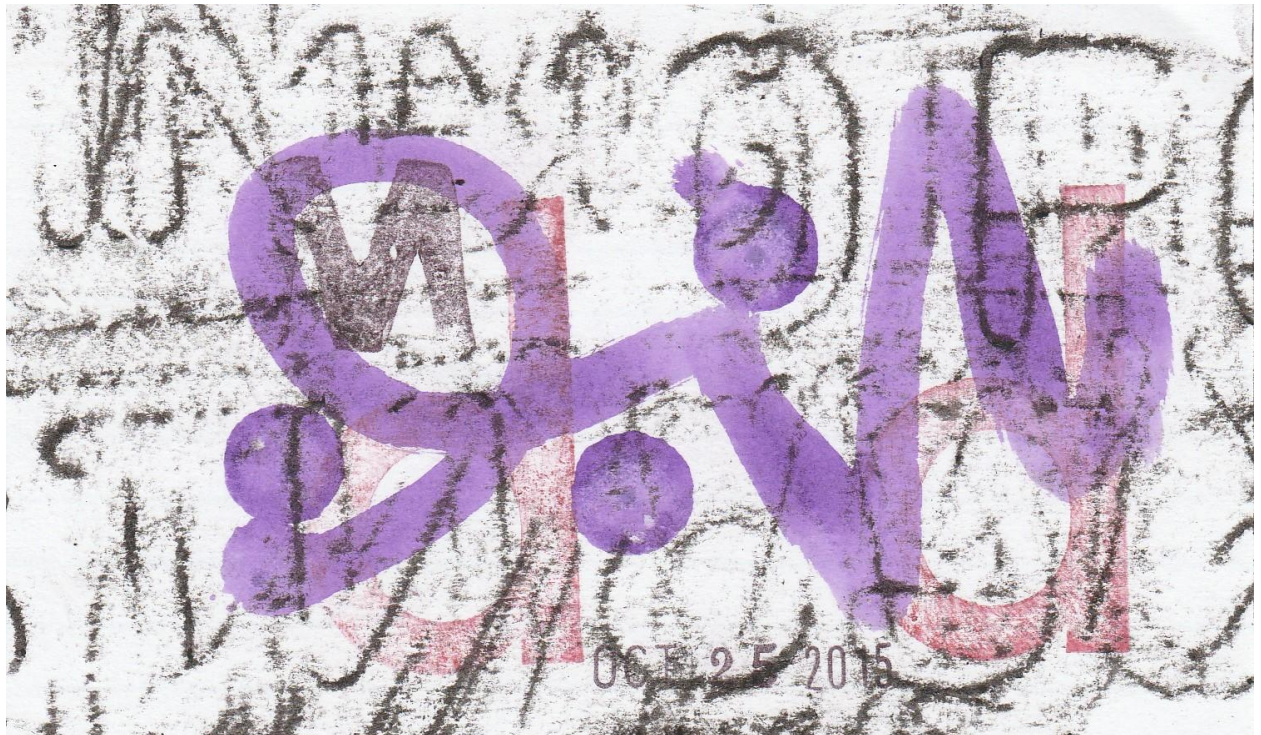
ideas associated with present impressions"—and those that are the outcome of wide attentive experience of recurring phenomena stored over many years. He would ask whether too much was being taken for granted in such dispositional beliefs and whether they could always be trusted. In the same way, he would check the hearsay knowledge; the time and circumstances in which the informants reported and the reliability of the informants are important. Having carried out this reexamination of the evidence, he would have fresh evidence. The total result of his labors might be that he would still find the evidence inadequate to equate enough to base a probable belief upon it. It is directly satisfactory to make such a test, since the test of adequacy would be subjective through and through; on the other hand, it would now be a test satisfactory to a reasonable man. This would give it objective value. It depends presumably on account one gives of the reasonable. At this stage it is wrong to assume that the adequacy is ever other than subjective.

It is also the further point whether a belief in which the evidence is shown to be adequate, a justified belief, is identical with knowledge in the strict sense. It can now be seen that the evidence is adequate only in a relative and not an absolute sense; nonetheless, it justifies belief in the opinion of reasonable men. A person can be convinced and certain, so that justified belief would here be one with knowledge in the strict sense and not be mere opinion. On the other hand, it would not be infallible and would not be knowledge of absolute truth. Clearly, there are three things distinguished: (1) probable knowledge; (2) certain knowledge, which is knowledge of absolute truth; and (3) infallible knowledge of absolute truth. Adequate evidence gives man (2), and, in this sense, fully justified belief is certain knowledge; but it is not knowledge of absolute truth.

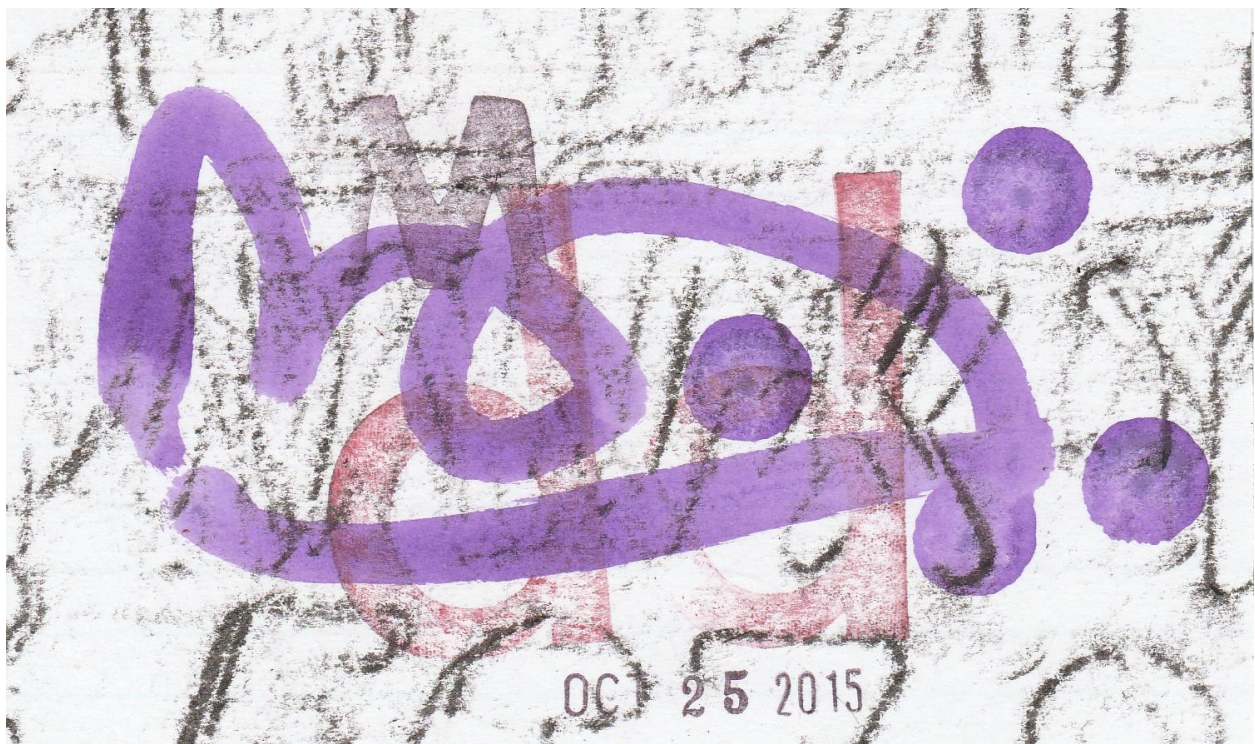
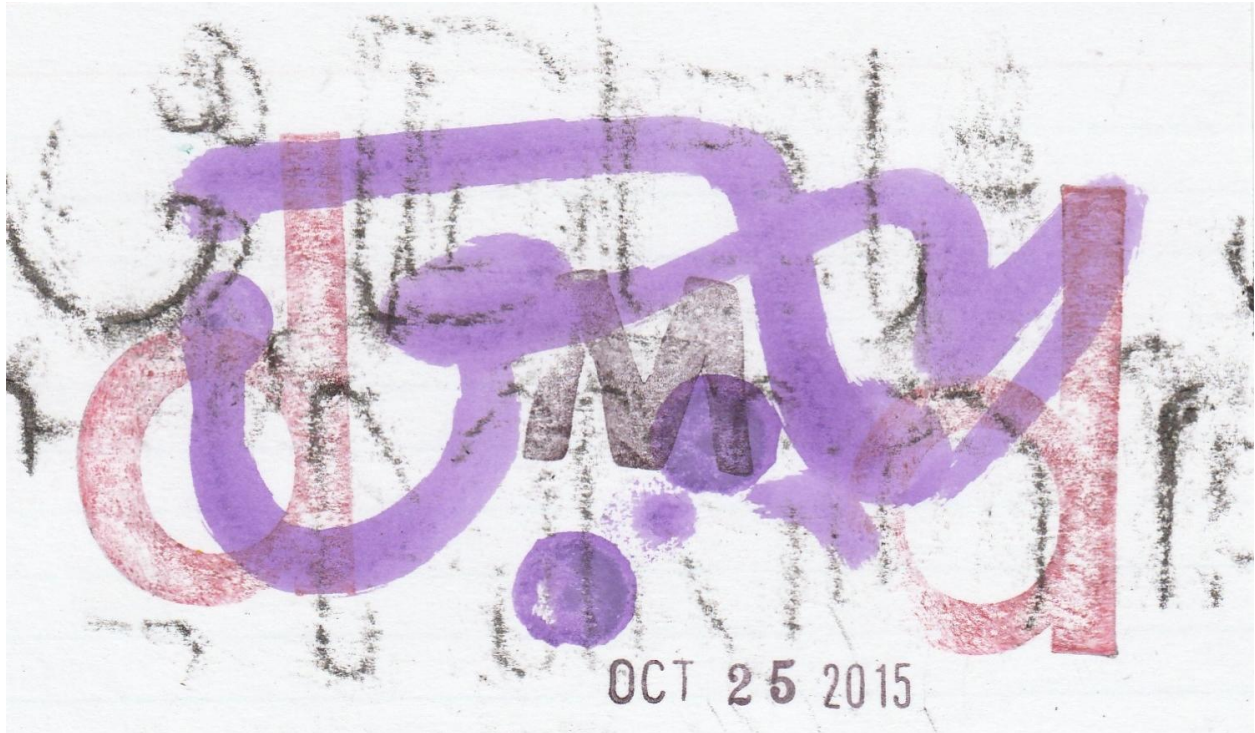
The meaning of the term probable requires brief consideration. The probable is sometimes defined as what is believed—i.e., it is subjectively determined. Efforts may be expended to make it less subjective by bringing forward supporting objective statements; but the probable, in the meaning of the word, is never wholly objective. In other

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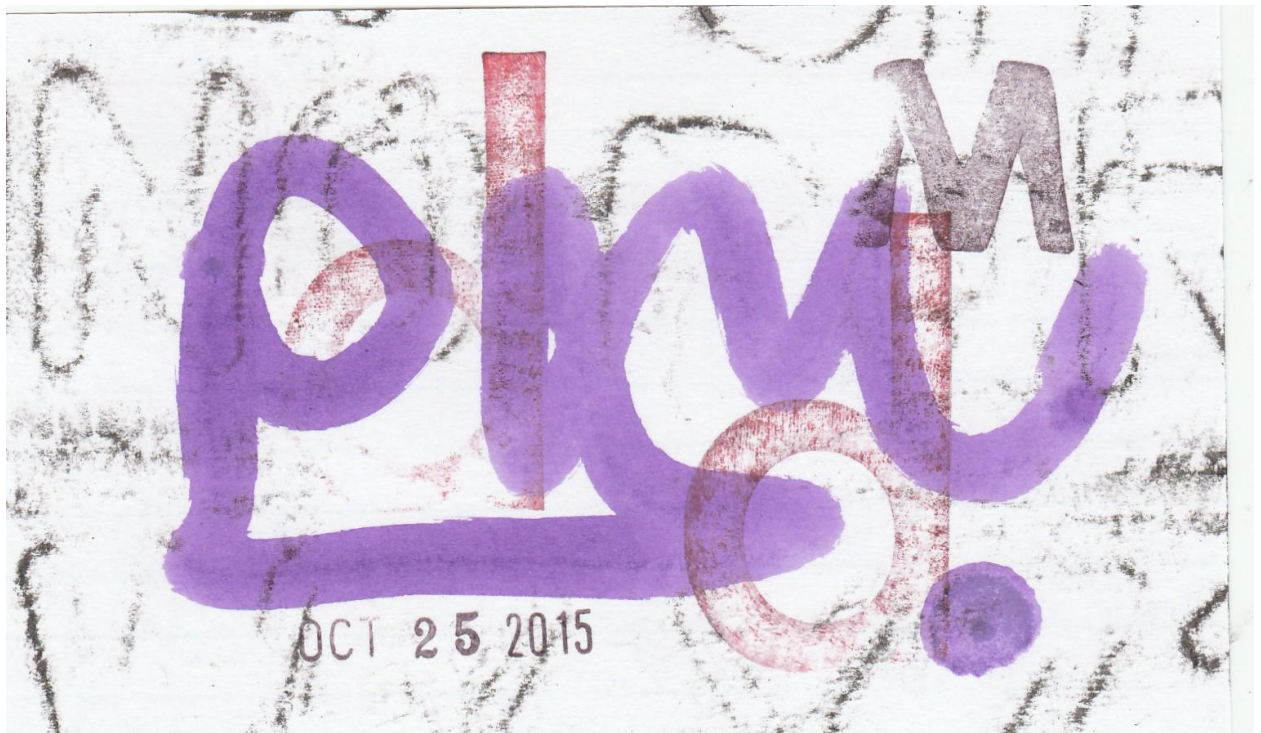
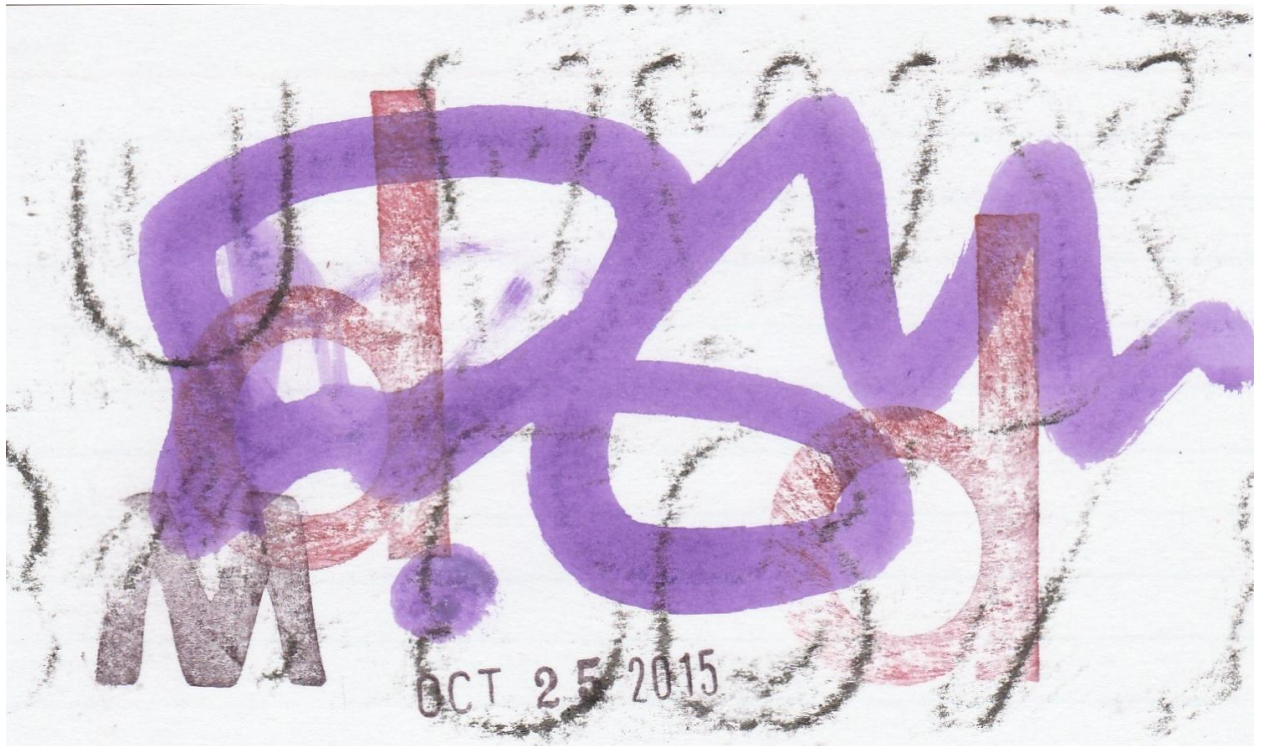


















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## Dryden's poetry

Dryden presided over the age. Apart from his prose, he wrote nearly 40 plays as well as a great deal of verse. His most famous poems were written in the last 20 years of his life. His attack on Thomas Shadwell, was published surreptitiously in 1682. His best-known poem, *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), had the supreme merit of satire in being reasonably fair and was immensely popular. *The Medal*, a political poem, followed in 1682, as did his *Religio Laici*, which indicated the evolution of Dryden's religious opinions. *The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel*, although by Nahum Tate, contains about 200 of Dryden's most telling lines. In 1687 he published *The Hind and the Panther*, an able argument for Roman Catholicism. Among Dryden's greatest achievements are his satirical odes in irregular rhyming verse. He took this form from Abraham Cowley and gave it a new strength in the superb tragic ode "To the pious Memory of the accomplished Young Lady Mrs. Anne Killegrew" and in memorable poems written for a London musical society, "Song for St. John's Day" (1687) and "Alexander's Feast" (1697), in which colourful rhythm and magnificent imagery combine with touches of wit to produce effects unique in English poetry.

At the beginning of 1688, Dryden lost his posts of poet laureate and his position as translator of the French language. In late in life, he produced a series of works, including some fine plays, his most famous being the Roman poet Virgil, and *Editha*, an epic poem. These works contain some of his most mature writing. His most famous verse tales founded on stories by the 14th-century Italian poet Boccaccio, which were admired and imitated by Byron and John Keats. His alliance with the Catholic Church, which was a literary and political liability. The translation of Virgil published in 1697 was the first large-scale publishing venture of the Restoration and probably the first to bring considerable profit to its author.

Poets survived the Restoration of Charles I, such as Abraham Cowley, Sir John Denham, and Edmund Waller, continued to produce competent verse. More typical was the poetry of the group of Restoration "court wits," which included Rochester, Sir Charles Sedley (Charles Sackville), and Sir George Etherege, Denham, Sackville, and Etherege wrote admirable light verse, continuing the courtly tradition of Carew and Suckling and at times catching the note of the contemporary popular street ballad. Rochester was the one considerable poet among the group. His best lyrics had an intense feeling and a mastery of melodic form. His verse satires were among the most notable of the century, ranging from the devastating personal comments of "The History of Insipids" (1633) to his powerful attack on facile optimism in *A Satyr Against the Progress of the Dying Infirmary* (1633). Indeed, these works were written before Dryden had published his first poem. There is little doubt that he owed a considerable debt to Rochester's example.

**Drama.** The Restoration period is chiefly remembered for its many plays. The King and the Duke of York gave their patronage to the drama and its flourishing in the London theatres, closed in 1642. Dryden's first play, known as the King's house, and Dorset Garden, known as the Duke's, were founded soon after the King's return.

There were few real tragedies, their place being taken by heroic plays, mostly dealing with the conflict between private life (love) and duty (political power or status). These mixtures of heroic romance and French tragedy were a mixture of bombast with occasional fine passages. Dryden's *Conquest of Granada* (performed 1670-71) is the best known, and *All for Love* (1677) can be read with enjoyment if it is remembered that it is not meant to be an imitation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* but a re-ordering of Shakespeare's themes. Two of his comedies, *Marriage à la Mode* (published 1673) and *Amphitryon* (published and performed 1690), are excellent.

Of other playwrights, Thomas Otway wrote well-constructed plays. His masterpiece, a topical political melodrama, was *Venice Preserv'd* (performed 1682), which has a tide of passionate language and bold delineation of character. Real comedy began with Sir George Etherege, who, in *The Man of Mode*, mirrored the gaiety and insolence of the world he knew. William Wycherley was a

writer of comedy with a serious purpose: his *Country-Wife* (published 1675) has great power, while *The Plain-Dealer* (1677) is a skillful transplantation of Molière's *Misanthrope*. Wycherley scavenges in the most callous good spirits and with careful cynicism; and his prose is excellent. The area was reached by William Congreve, who, had his plots been taken from the world, would have been one of the world's great dramatists. His *Love for Love* (performed 1695) and *The Way of the World* (1700) has hardly been surpassed for sheer wit. Sir John Vanbrugh wrote *The Relapse* and *The Relapse* (both published 1697); and though he was a less skilful writer than Congreve, his plays are full of vigour and humour. The coarse, powerful comedies of Thomas Shadwell formed a link between the art of Ben Jonson and the realistic fiction of the age of Henry Fielding.

## SCOTTISH LITERATURE

With the union of the crowns of Scotland and the transference of the court to London, Scottish writing became increasingly Anglicized. John Barrow VI showed that he could turn out a poem in Scots, but the poets wrote almost exclusively in English. The exception, William Drummond, was a poet of great quality but his lack of intensity and force. Scottish poetry was alive in popular songs and ballads, such as *Rochester's Life and Death of Jabbie Shanon*. With the Restoration, as in the older ballads, of amusing as in *John Barrow*, the tradition was of the heart rather than of the head, and the absence of an intellectual and critical quality has been a besetting weakness in later Scots verse.

The first original literary prose appeared in the theological writing of John Ireland (c. 1435-c. 1500). The prose of these works had not yet developed great variety or flexibility of construction. Early in the 16th century there was an attempt at a less Latinized prose in Murdoch Nisbet's version of Wycliffe's *New Testament*, but the language is too southern to be quite successfully idiomatic. Some English influence is seen also in the 16th-century historical writings of John Belleniden, John Leslie, and Robert Lindsay of Pittsford. And to a greater extent in works such as the Scottish Reformation leader John Knox's *Historie of the reformacion of religion within the realm of Scotland* (1562). The writers, however, had a good command of the language. John Leslie and Knox had also the gift of style. John Leslie's vivid as Knox's writing was the autobiographical *Life of the Lyff of James Melvill*, which covered the second half of the 16th century. The remarkable anonymous *Complaynt of Scotlande* (1548-49) is interesting both as the work of a well-read Scottish patriot and as the first work of a Scottish experimenter in prose style. The need to reach English readers is seen in the writings of James VI: the manuscript of his *Basilikon Doron* was in Scots, but, when published in 1599, it had been translated into English. William Drummond's *Cypresse Grove* (1623) was in careful, grave, mannered English; and not much Scots prose occurred after that date. A general justification for this turning to English may well be seen in Sir Thomas Urquhart, "the freest spoke Scot of any," whose translation of Francois Rabelais and extraordinary original works displayed an ornateness that would have cracked the molds of Scots as it did those of English.

## ANGLO-IRISH LITERATURE

Until the 17th century the language of Ireland was Irish. The Anglo-Irish were a small colony, a garrison holding a perilous outpost, constantly yielding linguistic as well as physical ground to the resurgent Gael; and even among the colonists English had to struggle for supremacy with Latin and French. A few manuscripts have survived, showing the existence of a vernacular poetry of no great originality or distinctiveness. The most striking example is the 13th-century satire *Land of Cockayne*.

The first notable Irish writer in English was Richard Stanyhurst, who contributed sections on Ireland to Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles* (1577) and attempted to write English verse on Latin models. As the colony grew and the conquest of the whole country was attempted, the stream of Anglo-Irish writing increased, and Gaelic as well as

First original literary prose

Heroic plays



During the second half of the century the periodical essay was gradually absorbed by the newspaper. Johnson's "Idler" essays appeared in *The Universal Chronicle*; Goldsmith's *Citizen* (as "Chinese Letters") in *The Public Ledger*.

#### THE SATIRE OF SWIFT

Swift's  
irony and  
satirical  
methods

Jonathan Swift, Irish-born of English parents and educated in Ireland, became both a dominant literary figure in England and the idol of Ireland for his championing of its wrongs. He was a man of subtle wit and wide reading, much of whose work was devoted to deriding the arrogant claims of the unsupported intellect. He ridiculed whatever he thought pretentious in religion, philosophy, or science by solemnly pretending to agree with his opponents and then assuming that they would agree with him in his logical reduction of their case to absurdity. The title of his brilliant tract, "An Argument To prove, That the Abolishing of Christianity in England, May, as Things now stand, be attended with some Inconveniences and perhaps not a few of those many good Effects proposed thereby" (1729) illustrates the method. Here the irony is at its most subtle. In *A Modest Proposal For Preventing the Children of Poor People From Being a Burthen to their Parents and the Country* (1729)—the treating them as food for the rich—a pamphlet devoted to satirizing the Irish, Swift shows his awareness of Irish poverty and the Irish mind. In his "Drapier's Letters" (1725) he used irony to attack the status of literature. *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), a "satire" like Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* in the "Fictional Books" (1704), he makes use of the mode of the novel, a form popular in political pamphleteering to satirize the insensitivity of "modern" critics and thinkers. Swift is interested in progress at the expense of a proper regard for human frailty and sin; in his most varied and important work, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), all these forms are employed. He used man's less agreeable physical functions to symbolize moral shortcomings, the allowed method of satire in all ages. Disappointed ambition may have chastened the sheer brilliance of Swift's cutting wit, yet that he did not see himself as righted against the rest of mankind as vile is evident from the tone of *Gulliver's Travels*, in which Gulliver's position between deposed and virtuous creatures (represented, respectively, as apes, Yahoos and noble horselike Houyhnhnms) is a representation of Swift's own. His invention was inexhaustible; he wrote brilliantly on any subject.

Swift's friend George Berkeley, bishop of Cloyne in Ireland, is remembered chiefly as a philosopher, though his tracts and Platonic dialogues are also of some literary importance. Like Swift, he was a lover of his country and expressed strong views about its welfare in his *Querist*.

#### LITERARY CRITICISM

Criticism, appearing for the first time as a continuous and widespread literary activity, passed through the reputations of the major English poets—Shakespeare, Milton, and, to a lesser degree, Chaucer and Spenser—on a firm critical basis in historical perspective. The foundations of modern texts of Shakespeare were laid by Johnson (1765) and, most notably, by Lewis Theobald, whose *Shakespeare restored* (1726) and an edition of the plays (1733) represented pioneer work in textual criticism.

Individual critics such as John Dennis, Addison, Pope, and Johnson worked within the frame of Neoclassical rules expounded by such French critics as Nicolas Boileau, but bent them to accommodate their feelings and personal vision. Critical theory dealt largely with the nature of poetic inspiration and aesthetic taste, an increasingly psychological account of the literary process; Lord Shaftesbury's *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711; revised and enlarged 1714, 1723) deprecates enthusiasm or imagination in religion and insists on its importance in literature to exalt the mind to serene contemplation. The preoccupation is with sublimity, a concept only vaguely apprehended but strongly felt not only in the century's criticism but also in its poetry. Shaftesbury posited a "moral sentiment" that draws man naturally to what is

good and beautiful. He sought to lift criticism above the level of religious or political squabbling, and Addison, a brilliant pamphlet writer, offered a theory rather than an original thesis, a balanced approach to literature that made the way easier for later critics who developed this kind of judgment.

Johnson condemned those who judge by precept rather than by perception and insisted that literary judgment must be related to experience. He believed that literature was valuable only if it claimed human experience. His greatness as a critic lies in his wide humane reading and in the fact that his grounds for criticism are always apparent and seldom capricious. These grounds are, in a broad sense, moral. When his judgment is at fault the failure is rather from inadequacy of experience than want of critical perception. For Johnson, as for most critics of his day, singularity implied deformity; nature, as experience common to all men, was the business of literature. Johnson's position in English criticism may be inferred from the words of his preface to his edition of Shakespeare: "Let the fact be first stated, and then examined."

What made Johnson a great critic made him also the great conventionalist depicted in James Boswell's *Life of Johnson* and the great prose stylist of *Rasselas* (1759) and *The Rambler*. Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), though not the first English dictionary, introduced methods of illustrating the use of words that have changed little since it was first published. As a lexicographer he was always concerned with accuracy, and, like Sir Thomas Browne, on whom he modeled his style, he found in Latin derivatives the most precise and compact form of denotation.

Johnson's  
Dictionary

#### THE REVOLUTION OF TASTE

During the second half of the century, the trend intensified toward a psychological expression of literary judgment based on unique, personal feeling. Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses* (1769–91) uphold Neoclassical traditions of imitation, but Edward Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) put original genius before learning. Young, like the Neoplatonist Shaftesbury, had a great influence in Europe.

Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry* (1774–81) and *Observations on the Faerie Queene* (1754) and Bishop Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) all demonstrated a growing interest in medieval and Renaissance literature. It was not too far in James Macpherson's *Ossian* (1762), the "medieval" poems of Thomas Chatterton, and collections of earlier poetry, notably Bishop Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765). Another important pointer to changing critical opinion was the first part of Joseph Warton's "Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope," with its emphasis on sublimity as the mark of "true" poetry and on freedom of expression. His praise of "poetical enthusiasm" and the poet's "creative imagination" indicates the basis on which the Romantic poets and critics built. All these works stress the importance of fantasy or imagination in poetry, but their originality lies in their emphasis rather than in a revolutionary approach. Perhaps the most revolutionary work was Thomas Tyrwhitt's "Essay on the Language and Versification of Chaucer" (1775), which destroyed an earlier illusion of Chaucer as a clumsy metrist. William Blake's marginal comments on Reynolds' *Discourses* were more indignant outbursts against academic precept than revolutionary criticism, although when taken with Blake's other work they represent a consistent literary theory.

#### THE NOVEL

The growth of the English novel is as indigenous as the development of the periodical. Daniel Defoe's picaresque heroes had prototypes in the Elizabethan fiction of Thomas Nashe, Robert Greene, and Thomas Deloney, but *Moll Flanders* (1722), *Colonel Jack*, and *Captain Singleton* were the imaginative heightenings of actual rogue histories of the time. Defoe's most famous novel, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), is based on contemporary fact. The novels of Samuel Richardson drew on original sources. *Pamela* (1740) was based on his own *Letters Written to and for*

Shaftesbury's  
influence

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Marvell's  
poetry

ley, author of clever amatory verse, the unfinished epic *Davidis*, and loose, irregular *Findarique Odes* (1655) on public themes. The finest of them was Andrew Marvell. In "To His Coy Mistress," "The Garden," "The Picture of Little T.C.," "A Dialogue Between the Soul and Body," "The Coronet," and "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland," all written about 1650–53, Marvell combined complex metaphysical intelligence and sensibility with the grace of a Cavalier and a structural and stylistic symmetry, economy, and clarity that may be called classical.

**Jonson and his influence.** In the golden age of English music, before and after 1600, numberless musicians created a wealth of song. Thomas Campion is the most noted example of the composer-poet. Along with elaborate lyricism went the simpler popular tradition; the songs of Jonson and Shakespeare illustrate both. Jonson's classicism extended from the ethical and Stoic ideals of Renaissance Humanism (embodied in reflective poems) to the artistic ideals that molded his songs and epigrams. He cultivated disciplined impersonality, symmetry, and clarity; his style was rational and urbane, without shocks or extravagance.

Among the many writers who felt Jonson's influence, perhaps the purest disciple and the most original was Robert Herrick. His Metaphysical wit, his instinct for the concrete particular, for a ambiguity, paradox, and surprise, was half concealed by his classical elegance, which included an exquisite feeling for words and rhythm. Herrick could live in the pagan world of the *Carpe diem* or in the Christian world of his belief. The great poets Thomas Carew, Sir John Suckling, and Richard Brome were also heirs of Jonson. Carew, the most skillful of the group, showed Donne's originality but showed little of his intellectualism. He preferred a classical order to a compelling idea and image. If Carew did not turn the sensual ecstasy of love into a courtly ritual, he speaks with the poise and balance of a courtier and a gentleman. Lovelace lives in a few songs of the ideal Cavalier, but even in these simplicity is touched with irony.

**Milton.** Milton's career, one of continuous development, fell into three periods: the early poems in Latin and English (the years 1632–60), given to public affairs (and occasional science), and the last phase of his three major poems. The volume of 1647 included the ode of Baroque beauty "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity," and the two companion pieces "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," which develop the Jonsonian manner. His style, now known as *Comus*, diversified in its stylistic range, unified in its Christian Platonism, and "Lycious" was one of the most complex poems in the language, a first effort to justify God's ways to men, in which religious, political, and personal tensions are powerfully stated in the metaphor of classical pastoral. The Metaphysical current left the young classicist almost untouched; he began in the Spenserian line but was from the start a master of original power.

Milton dreamed of writing the great modern heroic poem, but his sense of responsibility impelled him to give 20 years to the Puritan struggle for liberty. He wrote five tracts against episcopacy; four on divorce; "Of Education"; "Areopagitica" (1644), a plea for freedom of the press; and, on the eve of the Restoration, a defiant plea for a republic. They record his increasingly radical thought; his hopes of a reformation, and his successive disillusionments.

When he came to compose *Paradise Lost* (1667), Milton was no longer a militant revolutionary; his three major works deal with the temptations, defeats, and victories of individual man. His early idealism gave way to reasserting in the face of science and progressive power the Christian Humanist view of God, man, and nature through an inspired use of the biblical myth of the Fall of man. Eve, in her desire for the godlike knowledge Satan promises, and Adam, in his curiosity and his following of Eve, re-enact the sin of Satan, pride and rebellion. His heroic villain, Satan, is a personality of grandeur, but in balancing this with his corruption Milton could rely upon his audience's reaction to evil.

He wrote as the conscious heir of the ancients, revivifying the conventions and details of the classical epics. Images blend the general with the particular, and his bold, id-

iosyncratic style is elevated above common speech, though ornate style also includes both simplicity and complex density of suggestion and evocation. The use of blank, or unrhymed, verse (10-syllabled lines of alternately stressed syllables) for "long poem" was a radical novelty, and Milton's handling of it enlarged English prosody.

*Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* (both 1671) show still further artistic developments. The former is in a style of almost biblical simplicity; the latter, the only English drama on the Greek model that can stand with those of the ancients, is in ruggedly irregular verse that comes close to speech. The hero of *Paradise Regained*, in a conflict of mounting tension, Christ displays the obedience and integrity that Adam and Eve have lacked. In the drama of Samson's struggle, human heroism—isolated, like the half-human Christ, even from human sympathy—achieves inward regeneration. These three poems of faith and fortitude stand out against the rest of Restoration literature.

#### THE RESTORATION PERIOD

The restoration of the monarchy in 1660 heralded a political and cultural break, but new developments came from the ferment and confusion of new and old. The year 1660 saw the appearance not only of the first edition of the old Milton's *Paradise Lost* but also of a modern poem, the young Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*. Isaac Newton in physics and mathematics, Robert Boyle in chemistry, and developments in biology strengthened radical change in the picture of the physical world, propagated by the newly formed Royal Society, which profoundly affected the intellectual temper of the age. A new political feeling emerged, in some ways typical, corrupt, and self-seeking yet marked by increasing toleration and humanity. It allowed the growing consciousness of the self that is found from Francis Bacon onward and that produced the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.

The court returned from exile with many French tastes and fashions. London became a European capital of high civilization. The theatre, reopened under royal patronage, became a preserve of the upper class and flourished. The literary forms of the modern world—the novel, biography, history, travel writing, and journalism—had their beginnings in the Restoration period, when English literature could be seen remaking itself in the face of new scientific and philosophic concepts and new social and economic conditions that called for the disappearance of patronage, the emergence of mass readerships, and the formation of the literary market.

**Prose.** The year 1660 marked a development in English prose. Men became increasingly interested in things rather than in words as science came to play a greater part in human affairs and the custom of writing emotional prose disappeared and a more familiar diction took its place. The Royal Society played some part; its origins were much earlier than 1662, when it received its first charter. The society was interested in prose style and soon after its foundation appointed a committee "for improving the English language." This was Sprat, in his *History of the Royal-Society of London* (1667), really a work of propaganda, laid down rules for a plain English style, though many scientific works, such as those by the great naturalist John Ray, were in Latin. Robert Plot's *Natural History of Oxfordshire* (1677) was in a simple style, but he still thought it necessary to write:

I intend to deliver as succinctly as may be, in a plain easie and unartificial style, studiously avoiding all ornaments of language, it being my purpose to treat of things, and therefore would have the Reader expect nothing less than words.

Hobbes, in his *Leviathan* (1651), had scorned and derided "obscure, confused and ambiguous Expressions; also all metaphorical Speeches, tending to the stirring-up of Passion," but probably the rise of journalism was as influential as any other cause. During the Civil War and the Commonwealth, pamphlets had been abundant. They were plain and simple, as a political pamphlet must be if it is to be effective.

The sermon, too, became simpler after 1660. John Wilkins, bishop of Chester, advocated a plain style in his discourse on preaching, *Ecclesiastes* (1646), and in

Paradise  
LostThe Royal  
Society



## The 17th century

EARLY PROSE

Translations and books of travel. This was the great age of translation. Philemon Holland, translating chiefly from the classics, combined scholarship with colour. John Florio's translation (1603) of the *Essays* of Michel de Montaigne, Thomas Shelton's *Don Quixote*, and Sir Thomas Urquhart's *Works* were all done with a racy gusto that has made them English classics. Greatest of all English translations is the King James (Authorized) Version of the Bible, was mainly the work of a succession of 16th-century translators and hence was somewhat archaic in 1611, yet Jacobean translators must share the glory through their taste for phrase and rhythm. Modern versions embody advances in learning and accuracy but suffer immeasurably by comparison. The cultural effects of the century's saturation in the English Bible are impossible to estimate.

Observation of foreign lands was a duty of the Renaissance Humanist, and to make the Grand Tour of Europe an obligatory part of the education of young aristocrats. Those at home found diversion in books of travel by such men as the eccentric Thomas Coryate, William Linskov, Fynes Moryson, and Peter Mundy, and in books of such narratives to imaginative writers as Shakespeare is one example; and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Trojan* of a Journey left traces in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Among the absorbing pictures of American settlements were those of the amazing Capt. John Smith. For travels of all kinds, Samuel Purchas' collection *Hakluytus Posthumus* or *Purchas*

The essay and "character." Increasing analysis of self and society was manifest in the development of the essay, and the "character," modeled in the brief sketches of ethical types by the ancient Greek author Theophrastus. Early essays, such as Sir William Cornwallis, Ben Jonson in *Tinibel, or, Discovered*, and Owen Felttham in *Resolves*, carried on the long pre-occupations of Renaissance Humanism. Francis Bacon's *Essays* (1597, much enlarged 1612 and 1625) were an integral part of a scheme for the advancement of knowledge, and his mundane scale of values was that of an objective social psychologist examining motives and behavior. James Howell's *Epistolae Hæcæticae* (1645-55) was a valuable reminder of the kinship between the letter and the familiar essay. Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) was a learned treatise on the related maladies of body and mind, but no other psychological treatise has been a measured bedside book. This cloistered scholar was the master of a colloquial style, an ironic observer of the human comedy, and a wise, compassionate counsellor.

History and biography. Cambridge's first English historians emancipated English history from the methods of the older chroniclers. The first English historian was William Camden's *Britannia* (1586) was translated from Camden's Latin by Philip Hollinshed in 1600. Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (1629) is apocalyptic, revealing history as a working out of God's providential will. Raleigh showed poetic vision in his brooding on the mortality of men and empires and military sagacity in his discussion of logistics. The nonapocalyptic tradition of Machiavelli and Tacitus was behind Bacon's study of states in *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry the Seventh* (1622), whereas Thomas Fuller's *Church-History of Britain* (1635) was a moving story of the church's trials.

The leading biographical writers of the 17th century were the clerical Fuller and the businessman Izaak Walton, a friend and eulogist of clerics, and the unclerical John Aubrey. Fuller, essayist, humorist, and intellect, showed his love of anecdote and vividly in *The Holy State* (*The Profane State*) and in *The History of the Worthies of England* (1662), the first dictionary of national biography. Izaak Walton turned into a semi-professional biographer; his lives of Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Hooker, George Herbert, and Robert Sanderson were printed during 1640–78; they have remained delightful and valuable through their author's sweetness of temper and his concern for truth and style. Fulke Greville's monument to John Philip Sidney was less of a biography than a polished treatise. The period yielded a wealth of memoirs and letters that are nearly all highly readable. Perhaps the most famous were the posthumous ones of Lord Byron and of Cherybury's account of her husband in a so-called "black-letter" role, *Elkon Basilike* (1649), the stained-glass image of the royal martyr—the joint work of King Charles and John Gauden—which became a potent weapon of propaganda; and that idyllic "picture of his own disposition," Walton's *Compleat Angler* (1653), a volume of collections of letters, those of Dorothy Osborne being famous for their humour, pathos, and charm.

The influence of religion. In the national arena, religious issues were a more or less central force interwoven with politics and economics, and writers engaged in controversies that accompanied war and revolution.

In this century the sermon was the only literary form familiar to all classes of people. Although preaching was much more stressed by Puritans than by Anglicans, the sermons that have survived are Anglican. Among the best are the "early" and mature critical analysis and austere exaltations of Lancelot Andrews and the large body of Donne's sermons. Jeremy Taylor is known for his richly pictorial images from nature and earnest moral coun-

Memoirs  
and letters



an exquisite style reminiscent of an Elizabethan century poet.

In 1842 a patriotic organization named Young Ireland and led by Thomas Osborne Davis, an eloquent writer, founded a new paper, *The Nation*, to which a large number of writers attached themselves. Another journal was the *Dublin University Magazine*, which, for about 40 years and was probably the finest magazine produced in Ireland. Most of the best Irish writers contributed to it, notably James Clarence Mangan, a prolific and uneven writer of every kind of verse, who, at his best, was one of the greatest poets of Ireland. He was much influenced by the German Romantics and in turn influenced Edgar Allan Poe. Other notable poets were Sir Samuel Ferguson, who wrote on Irish themes in a strikingly original way, inspired to some extent by Gaelic examples, and William Allingham, who wrote a long and interesting narrative in verse, *Laurence Bloomfield in Ireland* (1864). He settled in England and became an associate of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, adopting the Pre-Raphaelite manner, which linked him with William Butler Yeats and a succeeding period of Irish writing.

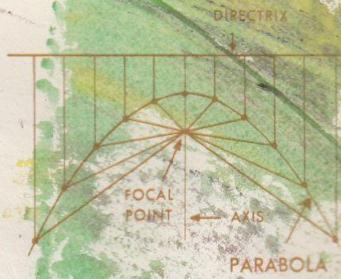
**Prose.** Among novelists was Charles Maturin, whose *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) had a wide influence in Europe. Even better known was Maria Edgeworth, who produced many novels, always with some edifying tendency. She knew Ireland well and depicted it with insight and humour in *Castle Rackrent* (1800) and in a later novel, *The Absentee* (1812). A landlord's daughter, she believed firmly that the solution of Ireland's troubles lay in an improvement of the outlook of its landlords.

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu was a successful writer of a different kind. Owner and editor of the *Dublin University Magazine* in the 1860s, he wrote many novels and short stories, chiefly dealing with mystery, crime, and the supernatural. He was the Irish master of the ghost story. He was also a poet, and there is a poetic quality about his work that raises it above the mere thriller.

#### SCOTTISH LITERATURE

The reemergence of vernacular prose, mainly within the novel and the short story, was a distinguishing feature of the 19th century in Scottish literature written in English. The writers fell into two groups: those using Scots for dialogue and English for the narrative, including Sir Walter Scott, James Hogg, Susan Ferrier, George MacDonald, Margaret Oliphant, William Black, and Robert Louis Stevenson; and those, such as John Galt, David Moir, and (in the 20th century) Lewis Grassie Gibbon, who employed a form of Scots or Scottishized English throughout. The advantage of Galt's method, in *Annals of the Parish* (1821), of casting the book as reminiscences of a Scots-speaking person, was that it secured a homogeneous tone,





parallel

parvleucopenia \pär-fä-kə-pē-ē-ə\ *n*.

MEDICINE and ZOOLOGY. A serious virus disease of cats, characterized by fever and extensive destruction of white blood cells.

*Although parvleucopenia is usually fatal, it can be immunized against.*

parabola \pə-rab-ə-lə\ *n*.

MATHEMATICS. A set of points, each of which is equidistant from a given fixed point, the focus, and from a given line called the directrix. A parabola is the plane section formed when a plane parallel to the side of the cone intersects the cone.

*A PARABOLA is a plane curve.*

parabolic \par-bäl-ik\ *adj*.

MATHEMATICS. Referring to, or generated by, a parabola.

*A PARABOLIC cylinder is a cylindrical surface whose directrix is a parabola.*

paralimnic \par-ə-lim-nik\ *adj*.

BIOLOGY and EARTH SCIENCE. Pertaining to the shoreline or shallow of a freshwater body.

*Many kinds of free-living organisms inhabit the PARALIMNIC zone.*

parallax \par-ə-laks\ *n*.

1. ASTRONOMY. The apparent change in position of a relatively-nearby celestial body with respect to background stars, when it is viewed from two locations. The apparent change is due to a change in position of the observer rather than to the motion of the celestial body. 2. PHYSICS. The apparent change in position of an object, such as an indicating needle on an electric meter, as a result of observations from different positions.

*PARALLAX is the apparent change in position of a nearby object against a background alternately with the right and then the left eye.*

parallel \par-ə-lē\ *adj*.

1. MATHEMATICS. In Euclidean geometry, referring to straight lines in a plane that do not meet, however far extended, and to planes or to straight lines and planes that do not meet, regardless of how far they are produced. 2. PHYSICS. Referring to an electric current in which the entering stream of electrons is separated into two or more branches that rejoin to complete the circuit.

*Two intersecting pairs of PARALLEL lines form a parallelogram.*

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of letters and memoirs that earlier had reached their summit in France with those of Mme de Sevigné and the Duc de Saint-Simon. In 1709 began the letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu; 17 years more saw the commencement of Lord Hervey's *Memoirs of the Reign of George II*, while Lord Chesterfield and Horace Walpole both began their series of *Letters* about 1740. Less modish but pleasing in their inostentatious charm, the letters of Gilbert White, published in 1789 as *The Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, show that the countryman's loving eye. The tail was not only active in the Romantic period. William Cowper also produced a collection of beautiful, perceptive, and graceful private letters. Stylistically at the opposite extreme is Chesterfield, who in treating of manners and social amenity deliberately sought a form of expression that is the perfection of tact, good order, and savoir faire. The most frivolous and also the most pungent of letter writers was Horace Walpole, whose writings are an epitome of the taste, history, and biography of the Georgian era. He was in many ways a corrective to the complacency of his generation: a vast dilettante, a lover of Gothic, of curios, costly printing, old illuminations, and stained glass.

Long known for his celebrated *Life of Johnson*, Boswell was also established as a master of English prose. When his journals were published in the 20th century, he became known as a pioneer in the exploration of the human unconscious, and a formative commentator on the 18th-century London scene. *The Diary and Letters of Mme de Sevigné* (Henry Parney) and the *Autobiography of the historian Edward Gibbon* are in their different ways also representative of 18th-century excellence.

It was not until the second half of the century that English historical writing escaped its reputation of lagging behind France, Italy, and Germany. David Hume published the first volume of his *History of England* in 1754. William Robertson's *History of Scotland* appeared in 1759 and his *History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* in 1769, adding to the growing contribution from Edinburgh of philosophical and sociological writing. Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* came in 1776–88. This monumental work is notable for its indefatigable attention to detail and its shrewd judgments. Gibbon's style was portentous in its dignity; he combined with the Skepticism of Hume and the method of Robertson an ordered harmony of thought and prose and a pleasing malice all his own.

In the philosophical and political writing of the latter part of the century, free thought was beginning to sap the defenses of the religious apologist; in the writings of Thomas Paine, Joseph Priestley, William Godwin, and Sir James Mackintosh. The greater champion of the continuity of tradition and conservatism and the perfect master of emotional prose was Edmund Burke, one of the most commanding intellects in the field of political letters—and in this respect a striking contrast to "Junius," the pseudonym of an unidentified author whose journalistic talent for invective had a quite different value.

#### DRAMA

An age of great actors, such as Samuel Foote and David Garrick, the 18th century in England was poor in drama. With the exception of Fielding, a playwright of some originality, and Goldsmith (*She Stoops to Conquer*, 1773), the men of literary genius, though many wrote plays, were not men of the theatre.

Toward the end of the century, in *The Rivals* (1775) and more especially *The School for Scandal* (1777) Richard Brinsley Sheridan showed that he alone possessed both the literary and theatrical qualities for great drama in the orthodox sense.

#### SCOTTISH LITERATURE

While Scottish prose writers were preparing to challenge English on its own terms, and while the union of 1707 was suggesting an even closer cultural binding of the two countries than had been possible a century before, a contrary impulse was making itself felt in poetry. Almost in the year of the union appeared James Watson's first volume of *Choice Collection of Comic and Serious Scots Poems*

(1706), which contained (among English pieces) vernacular poetry, from *Christie Kirk on the Green* and *The Cherry and the Slae* to recent verse like *Habbie Simson* and *The Blythesome Bridal*. This was followed by Allan Ramsay's *Ever Green* (1724) and *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1724 ff.) and by the later collections of David Herd, John Pinkerton, James Johnson, and George Thomson. These anthologies testify to a new national consciousness that began with a deliberate invocation of past achievements and eventually produced original work in the tradition of these achievements. As political identity was lost, cultural differences were increasingly recognized as significant. Educated speech was slowly but surely following written prose into anglicization, but in poetry the heart of the language was still felt to beat, however faintly, as it was also in common speech and in the old songs and ballads that were being reprinted. Ramsay's own poetry, like that of Robert Fergusson (1759–74) and Robert Burns (1759–96), flourished on a union of these elements: the racy vigour of Scots speech, the musicality of the songs, and the poetic forms and techniques, such as the Habbie Simson stanza, the humorous elegy, and the verse epistle, with which recent poets like the Sempills and William Hamilton of Gilbertfield had helped to solder the vernacular tradition. This new poetry lacked the range and also the intellectual power of the masters' verse. Nevertheless, its qualities were notable and in many ways attractive: in the love songs "Duncan Gray" and "O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast"; in the voice given to joy and pathos of "rae the gangrel bodies" in "The Ganges"; in the unrelenting descriptive tartness of "The Auld Reekie" and "Butterfly." Burns excellently combined satires and love lyrics; in the former he carried on the tradition of Dunbar left off at in the latter he crystallized the long anonymous song. In forms at once popular and refined, many traditions meet in Burns, and his poetry, in its own perfects, and consolidates existing poetic modes and themes in a way that even in his own lifetime made it apparent that he was going to be a national bard. If any poet has deserved the epithet "life-giving" it is Burns, and yet by one of the ironies of literary history he proved a liberator for the poetry of England but not for that of his own country.

Among minor poets of the period, some of the best were women: Lady Grizel Baillie, Jane Ellis, Lady Anne Lindsay, and Lady Nairne. Of writers in English, James Thomson in *The Seasons* (1726–30) shares with Gavin Douglas the ability to make winter more impressive than summer, and produces some heavily drawn pictures of "Caledonia, in romantic view." Robert Blair's *Grave* (1743) shows a grim, macabre relish not uncommon in Scottish poetry. William Falconer's *Shipwreck* (1762), admired by Burns, deserves mention; and James Beattie's *Minsirel* (1771–74) has historical importance as an early Romantic poem. Here must also be noted three popular and influential works of the time: John Home's tragedy *Douglas* (1756), Scottish in theme but not in language; the cloudy grandeurs of James Macpherson's Ossianic fragments, which presented Europe with a version of the noble Gael; and that "bosom favorite" of the young Burns, Henry Mackenzie's tear-strewn novel *The Man of Feeling* (1771).

#### The 19th century

##### THE ROMANTIC PERIOD

The term Romantic movement is somewhat misleading; it was hardly a movement, and the word Romantic is so vague and general that it is almost meaningless. The writers of the period differed widely in the nature of their work and in their critical approach. They did not apply the word Romantic to themselves, and recognition of their achievement by both the public and critics was slow in coming.

**Features of English Romanticism.** With these reservations in mind, it may be possible to isolate the distinguishing features of English Romanticism. These had obvious correspondences with political and social upheavals of the time: the American and the French revolutions, emphasizing natural rights and the importance of the individual, were reflected in attitudes of writers such as William Blake

Gibbon's  
*Decline  
and Fall*

Sheridan's  
plays

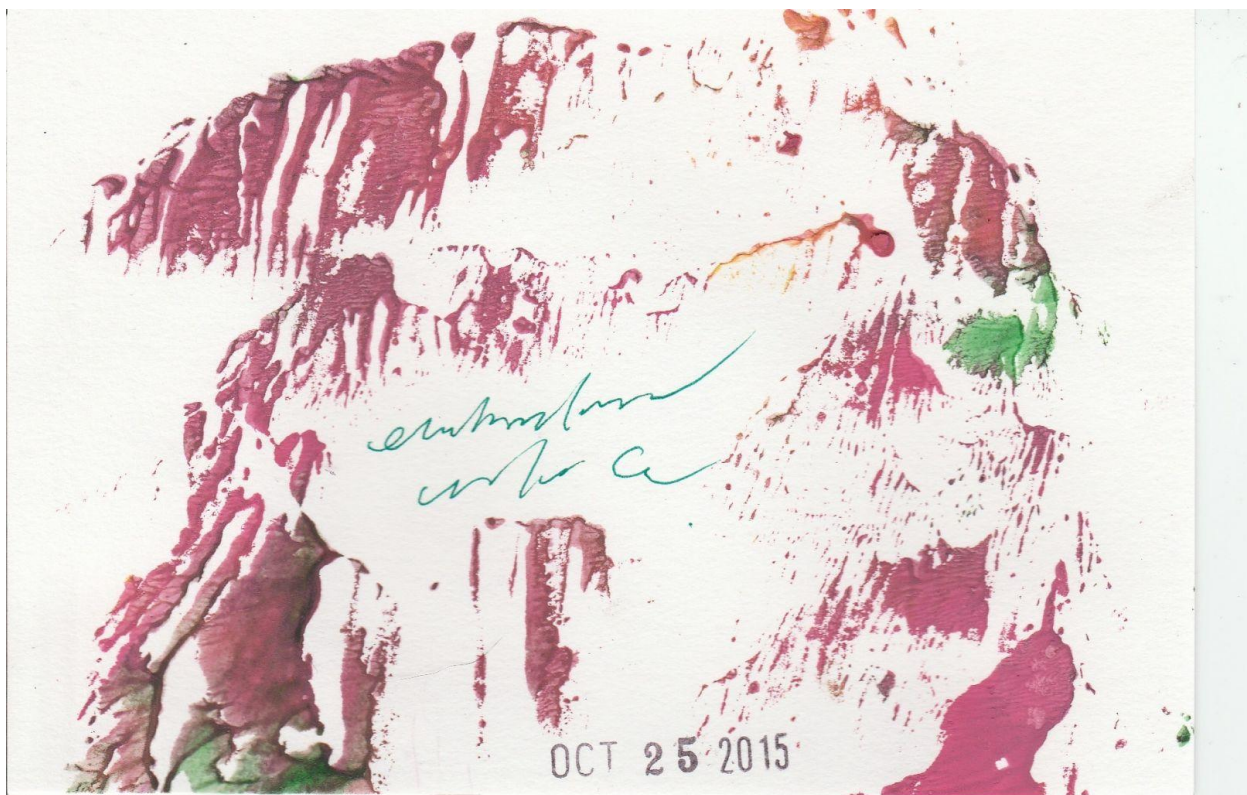




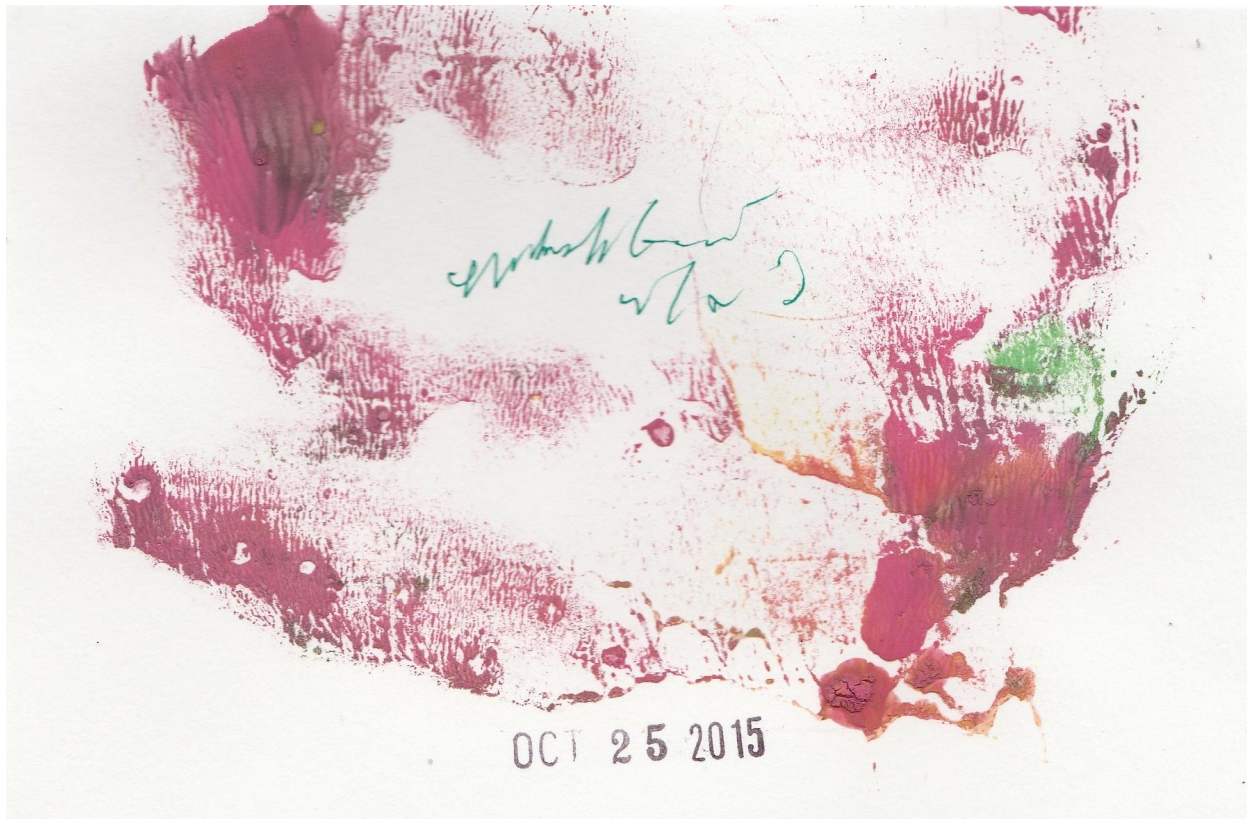












Wendy W. Gant  
W. L. D.

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Marlowe) were the most notable. Lyly, the most polished, wrote renderings of classical legends or fanciful superstitions, such as *Campaspe* and *Endimion*, with a close regard for unity of action and employed with assurance many devices that later became conventional—the ready introduction of light but poised lyric, the handling of a comic subplot as a foil to romance, and above all the use for high comedy of a highly wrought prose. Peele and Greene wrote lively blank, or unrhymed, verse and contributed to the tone of idyllic romance that characterized later comedy—Peele in *The Arraignment of Paris* and *The Old Wives Tale* and Greene in *The Honorable Historie of frier Bacon* and *frier Bongay*.

*The Spanish Tragedie* (c. 1590) by Thomas Kyd was as popular as it was influential. Drawing freely on Seneca and Machiavelli, Kyd established the theme of revenge that was to be the staple of much later tragedy. The play is a series of terrifying theatrical shocks, until the wronged Hieronimo, takes a spectacular revenge and dies in his moment of triumph.

In the plays of Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine*, *Doctor Faustus*, *The Jew of Malta*, and *Edward II* (all written between about 1587 and 1592), which were in the widest sense morality plays, the heroes aspired to boundless dominion, forbidden knowledge, ideal beauty, or limitless wealth, inevitably overreaching themselves and ending in destruction. The plays are borne irresistibly forward in the theatre by Marlowe's verse, which, though sometimes rhetorical and bombastic, rose often to a classical serenity.

**Shakespeare.** Perhaps the first poet to combine appreciation of the freedom of the Renaissance with a profound intuition of the spiritual needs and potentialities of man was William Shakespeare. But, apart from *Titus Andronicus*, a tragedy of blood strongly influenced by Kyd, his first plays were little different from those that already held the London stage. *Henry VI* (three parts) broke no new ground and lacked the vigour of its successor, *Richard III*. These plays formed Shakespeare's first biographical. His later histories, *Richard II*, *Henry IV*, and *Henry V*, showed his view of the

The histories



historical cycle of the Plantagenet kings, *Henry IV* (two parts), which gave Shakespeare increasing power to transcend the limitations of the play, reaching beyond it to a larger vision of the world. In the eight plays, Shakespeare used the tragic histories of the Plantagenet kings to show the transmission of evil from one generation to the next. The plays differed sharply in dramatic technique. While *Henry IV* had much in common with a patriotic pageant and *Richard II* with a morality play, *Henry IV* was something more. The creation of Falstaff and the way his life in the tavern is compared to the King's marked a new complexity in the drama and showed Shakespeare exercising on the past of England the creative powers of a poet. He wrote two more history plays: *King John* and *Henry VIII*. His last play, a complimentary but dignified attachment of the Plantagenet cycle to the reign of Elizabeth.

Shakespeare's early comedies showed his willingness to follow any fashion that seemed profitable. In *Love's Labour's Lost* he displayed admiration for the gently satirical comedy of Lyly; yet he excelled him in Roman wit and diversified diction. Similarly, since *Greene* and *Frier Bacon*, and *frier Bougay* had succeeded in mixing sentiment, comedy, sensation, and mystery, Shakespeare continued the style in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. *The Comedy of Errors* was of the same type as *Ralph Roister Doister*; yet it was unmistakably the work of a poet. The first play Shakespeare wrote in a form new to the English stage was *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, developing a pattern of gentleness and magnanimity in the main plot set against the humbler virtues of honesty and conviviality in the subplot, a pattern that was repeated in *The Merchant of Venice* and his three mature comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*. Each of these has a unified tone, the threat of tragedy or the uncertainty of the conclusion produces contemplation of the transience of happiness, while the robust subplots prevent sentimentalism. Above all, what distinguished these plays from earlier and later English comedy was that they were written mainly in blank verse. Shakespeare varied it with expert prose, courtly or vulgar as the action required, but his staple was verse of unprecedented flexibility.

The comedies

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...sense of the word, however, the probable is objective throughout. When the mathematician speaks of what is probable—for instance, the probability of an event recurring in a sequence of experiments—he speaks objective certainty, and his probability is the ratio of the number of favourable cases to the total number (both favourable and unfavourable) of all possible cases. It is an objective certainty that mathematically determined probability of an event can turn out to be improbable; the occurrence has, for example, only a 4 percent probability, one should not expect of the occurrence as being probable. Finally, it is reasonable to ask whether, if it is said that a statement is probable, this means that the speaker is certain that it is probable or merely thinks it is probable that it is probable.

#### MENTAL ACTIVITY

**Thinking and language.** What distinguishes contemporary epistemology from earlier studies in the field is its profound interest in linguistic problems. On the one hand, the demand for precision in the use of language has been greatly stressed. Some writers have spoken of the need for a special, logically exact, philosophic language. Others have held that the whole task of philosophy is to make completely clear what is being said at any moment. There have been discussions about the possibility of a specialist philosophic language, and attempts to handle philosophic problems with the language of formal logic so far have not always been successful. It has further been doubted whether analysis, in the sense of analyzing precisely what is being said, is the whole of philosophy. Probably no one would deny, however, that as high a degree of linguistic precision as is possible is a requirement in all philosophic discussion and that the epistemologist, for instance, has been helped by closer analyses of such words as know, believe, and see.

His interest in linguistic problems has been heightened, too, by his realization of the part that language plays in

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Senecan imitations

and the wise  
vice himself was  
prince (such as Richard  
Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*), and  
intrigues spin the plot of many later comedies.

The simple medieval idea of tragedy as the rise and fall of a great man was complicated by the Senecan plays of Italy and by those of Seneca himself, all moral melodramas of violent passions marked by revenge, usually bloodthirsty, ghosts, and supernatural forces. Such direct English imitations as *Gorboduc* (performed 1532) by Sackville and Thomas Norton, were poor things; yet the Senecan form was fully barren in England, as the heroic tragedies of Corneille and Racine in France, also derived from Seneca, show. The Senecan tradition was, however, important for later writers, leading to them the pattern of high tragedy, and at the same time the pattern of late and retribution and at the same time the pattern of stage mechanics (the chorus, and the play within the play). At the same time the use of iambic pentameter, of the verse (unrhymed line of five feet, each foot consisting basically of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed) became standard thereafter in English verse tragedy and epic poetry.

From about 1550 various academic writers produced comic plays in English, accepting discipline through the classical Latin playwright Plautus, or at the five-act structure and unity of action, but choosing native themes and treating them with a humanism. The most celebrated comedies of the middle of the century were *Ralph Roister Doister* by Nicholas Udall and the broad rustic farce *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.

By 1580 a number of chronicle plays and historical interludes such as John Bale's *Kyng Johan* had already appeared, and thus all the major dramatic forms had been foreshadowed. As Sidney pointed out in his *Defence of Poesie*, however, they were not clearly distinguished and were often ruinously entangled. It was to be a characteristic of the English drama to prefer in general mixed modes to a classical purity of tone.

The "university wits" and Kyd. Of the playwrights who flourished between 1580 and 1595, the "university wits" (who included Lyly, George Peele, Greene, Nashe, and

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reces  
quacy  
vidence

... concludes that Smith is  
guilty, he cannot be said to have acquired  
dispositionally; for in his case there is an act of  
judging, and the belief is thus an occurrence.

The sources of the evidence on which a man may base belief require consideration. The first of these is, clearly, sense perception: the actual seeing, touching, and hearing. The second is the memory of such experiences; and the third is inference from the information gained initially by the senses. In addition, an observer may be conscious of his own feelings of pleasure, pain, joy, sorrow, grief, envy, love, and hatred. From these sources a body of information may be acquired to which a person can turn when seeking evidence and by which he is so disposed that certain statements are acceptable while others arouse suspicion. Another important source of evidence is hearsay knowledge: all that a person has been or is being told by others. This information would be very slight indeed if it were confined to what he has gained independently of others; for the greater part of it comes from communication with others—through talking, writing, reading, picturing, and so on.

The next question debated is one as to the adequacy of evidence for or against a belief. Evidence is usually taken to be adequate (1) when it enables a man to settle the point at issue, to make up his mind, and (2) when it provides him with the truth. It has been suggested that there is no real difference here; for only a knowledge of the truth could settle the issue. But men often have to make up their minds on mere probabilities. Moreover, if knowledge is always fallible, then to say that the evidence is adequate would inevitably be to speak relatively; it would be adequate for the person now seeking to determine its adequacy. He would want to re-examine the evidence and to check the sensory experiences, the memory, and the inference. He would reflectively study the dispositions and tendencies, both those that seem almost mechanical—for instance, beliefs that (to quote David Hume) are "lively

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ous and *Timaeus* have only  
references to them. The *Sophist* also fails to provide a full discussion of Forms; and what is most interesting is that, in it, Plato argues that "change, life, soul, and understanding" are real along with the Forms. The one dialogue of this latter period that deals at length with the Forms is the *Parmenides*, in which the ancient master Parmenides takes the young Socrates to task and is critical of his theory of Forms. The purpose of the dialogue is puzzling, though it is sometimes thought that Plato here repudiates his earlier doctrine of Forms; this is not the generally accepted view. Instead, the dialogue may well express some of Plato's doubts about the adequacy of his earlier views on a crucial point—the relationship between the Forms and the particulars that participate in the Forms. Possibly it may express, too, his doubts about the ontological status of the Forms and of the relations that the Forms have to one another.

What is important is Plato's statement of Rationalism. The senses do not reveal the true structure of the world, he holds, but reason reveals it; consequently rational knowledge must be clearly distinguished from sensory awareness. These are quite distinct faculties and their objects are probably distinct as well. Knowledge of the objects that reason reveals is presupposed in all other knowledge. The theory of Forms thus aimed at providing a rationalist foundation for any subsequent epistemology. Further, it provided ontology (the study of Being) with the permanent and immutable (in contrast to the mere flux of the followers of the Pre-Socratic philosopher Heraclitus) and a rationality with absolute standards (in contrast to the subjectivity of the Sophists, private teachers of success).

*Categories, nature, and reason in Aristotle.* Aristotle qualified Plato's Rationalism but did not reject it. He was critical of the Platonic view that knowledge is a universal system deducible from a principle, such as that of the Form of the Good. However excellent such a deductive universal science may appear in theory, Aristotle saw that in practice it transcends human capabilities; when human knowledge is considered as it is, it is clearly not Plato's universal science. And his epistemology is erroneous because the theory of Forms on which it rests is erroneous. In his *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, Aristotle attacked the concept of Form. Plato, he held, thinks of it as a separate entity, an individual. But, if the Form man is an individual

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infallible  
versus  
certain  
knowledge

for the person believing it; (3) what is believed to be the case is true.

The question then arises, however, whether the rejection of the possibility of absolutely certain knowledge is justified. The distinction between infallible knowledge and fallible certain knowledge is of vital importance in this context. To say that men are never certain is to go against the facts. For men are daily quite certain of what they see, the size of their paycheck, that they are now fired, and so on; what does lie beyond them is infallible knowledge of absolute truth. But to deny the possibility of infallible knowledge is not to deny that of certain knowledge. It would appear, therefore, that the schools of thought today of certainty being beyond the reach of man and of all alleged knowledge being only belief are in error and that their error rests on their failure to distinguish between complete certainty, of which man is capable, and knowledge of absolute truth, beyond every possibility of error, of which, apparently, he is not capable.

Believing in some of its uses, the word belief has an emotive undertone, as when a man speaks of belief in God, signifying thereby an element of trust in and esteem for the object. But most often the word is used without evaluative overtones. To believe is to accept something as being the case; it is a species of knowing that is not certain but probable. There are degrees of probable knowledge, ascending from the lowest probability to the highest. Further, belief may be either dispositional or occurrent—dispositional, as when a man is called kind although not now performing kindly, and occurrent, as when he is said to be angry, only when he is actually in that state of mind. A person gets used to certain recurrences and comes to believe dispositionally that they will go on recurring—that his food will nourish him, that clouds presage rain, and that fire causes heat. Some epistemologists argue that all believing is dispositional. And, for those who also deny the possibility of certain knowledge, it would seem that all cognition is dispositional. But this would seem to be an extreme view. Although much believing is properly dispositional, not all of it need be. If, for instance, an attorney in examining a case looks at all the evidence, weighs the possibilities carefully, and finally comes to a decision in all likelihood, this knowledge is not merely dispositional.

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ment must be accepted as true—is really a special faculty operative only in the very limited field or whether it may not be the discerning that provides assurance throughout man's concrete experiences.

As for the body of basic categorical knowledge that Rationalists believe conditions the development of further knowledge, considerable doubt is expressed today about their description of man knowledge—e.g., of substance and of cause. The fact is that the bases of man's conceptual systems of thought and that the principles usually held to be basic, such as those of noncontradiction, identity (that everything is what it is), and the excluded middle (that no third statement can be admitted between two contradictories), are still being reformulated and amended by logicians. It is not clear how this rethinking could happen, if reason once and for all had planted these absolute truths upon man's mind. Finally, it is argued that knowledge of the transcendent, the nonempirical, which, too, is taken to be a priori, may well have been derived from the experienced, even though it itself is never directly experienced. Thus, Rationalism has had to face considerable criticism. Some of the criticisms have pointed toward the view that human knowledge rests throughout on convention, but conventionalism itself has come up against assurances that man has in his experience about things and occurrences that are independent of him; and such knowledge can in no way be regarded as conventional.

Though the foregoing outline of many matters that are relevant to the contemporary epistemology have been omitted from this brief sketch, some of the gaps will be filled in later. The purpose of the foregoing outline has merely been to provide an insight into the main confrontations.

Rationalist orientation

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Plowman and Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight

But its intensity of feeling and range of thought no parallel in a magnificent statement of the mind with of the late 14th century and one of the greatest English poems. A very different tone was the chivalric romance, *Sir Gawayne and the Grene Knight*, in which the author told a tale of enchantment in an Arthurian setting; but he depicted his characters and his hero's moral dilemma with such subtle understanding that the poem becomes a serious reflection upon human conduct. Gawayne is represented as a devout Christian, humanly imperfect. The alliterative lines are tautly constructed and the vocabulary is extraordinarily rich—strongly influenced by French but coloured also by dialect words of northwestern England. The blend of sophisticated atmosphere, psychological depth, and regional language produces an effect unlike that of any other work of the time. In the same manuscript as *Sir Gawayne* and with so many stylistic similarities that they are generally attributed to the same author were two alliterative poems of moral teaching, *Patience* and *Purity* (Cleanness), and an ostensibly elegiac poem called *Pearl*, in which the poet sees a vision of his daughter who died in infancy and is instructed by her in submission to God's will. He conducts a theological debate with intricate technique, showing in descriptions an enjoyment of colour and light as in *Sir Gawayne*; yet for all this complexity he conveys a poignant sense of personal grief.

#### POETRY: THE CHAUCERIAN TRADITION

The alliterative revival reached its height, yet it was the end of a line. The future lay mainly with the tradition of Middle English verse modelled on French in the early Middle English period. Soon after the alliterative revival began, this other tradition acquired new life from the early works of Geoffrey Chaucer, which, however, for all their skill, still owed an enormous debt to France—the influence

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Republic. Her forms mentioned by Plato are those of unity, plurality, equality, likeness, unlikeness, motion, and rest. Later, she adds the Forms of things, for instance, of man and of living creatures, of fire and water, possibly even of gold, clay, and dirt.

The Forms are not known by the senses, and he explains in the *Phaedo* how the senses may show things to be more or less equal, though equality itself ("the just equal") is not seen or felt, but is known independently of sense. Forms, Plato holds, may be recalled from knowledge that the soul

possessed prior to its union with its material body or may be directly apprehended. In either case, knowledge emanates from a divine element in the soul that knows the transcendent, eternal and eternal object and thereby reveals its own eternal nature. The same account of Forms is found in *The Republic*, in which a comparison is made between opinion and knowledge. Opinion, resting on sense experience, informs us about the phenomenal, but knowledge reveals the unchanging real; the former is fallible, the latter is infallible.

s, the outcome of Plato's discussion of knowledge is, first, a conviction that, whereas sensory experience is superficial and deceptive, the soul nonetheless is able to know—and to know infallibly—the immutable, the eternal, the Form which exists separately from the phenomenal. Secondly, a universal science that is eternally true is possible.

turning to Plato's later dialogues, it is surprising that little attention is paid in them to the Forms. The most important epistemological study among them, the *Theaetetus* (to be considered later in *Empiricist orientation: Classical philosophers*), is an examination of sensory knowledge and of belief that manages to carry this out without once referring explicitly to the Forms. The *Aule-*

over “inkhorn terms”—words borrowed wholesale from Latin by scholars and stylists writing in English, often to excess and with ludicrous results. Nevertheless, practice in the classics did much to give form to the English sentence; yet its strongest rhythms derived from the simplicities of English speech. Edmund Spenser inherited his fable from Malory and much of his language from Chaucer. Though great masterpieces at the end of the medieval period were few, its importance for the understanding of the wealth that followed was immense.

## SCOTTISH LITERARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Apart from poems of doubtful authorship the earliest extant narrative poems appeared in the second half of the 14th century. No date of much earlier literature has been lost, as neither John Barbour's *Bruce* (completed 1376) nor *Susanquhair* or *Pistill of Susanne* (c. 1360, ascribed to Thomas of Rymyale) can be called primitive in technique. These poems represent two traditions, the former being in octosyllabic rhyming couplets, the latter having the alliterative rhyming stanza that reached Scotland through Middle English alliterative writers of the north and became a characteristic Scottish poetic form. To the first tradition belonged Andrew of Wyntoun's *Oryngynale Cronykil* (c. 1420), a history of Scotland; and *The Buke of Alexander* and *Legends of the Saints*, which belonged to Barbour's time and region. The second tradition developed romance and fantasy and included Richard Holland's *Buke of the Howlat*, an anonymous *Colagatus* and *Gawain*, *Rauf Collyear*, and shorter pieces such as *The Gyre-Carling*. William Dunbar's *Kynd Kytikok* and Robert Henryson's *Scot Prædictis of Medecyne*. The rather dry style of John Barbour suited his own patriotic narrative but had little influence on later poetry. His *Bruce*, a national epic in kind if not in value, was an isolated poem. The more flamboyant alliterative tradition had a lasting effect well beyond the medieval period and was valuable in forging a link between popular and sophisticated verse, which in Scotland was not broken to the same extent as in England.

The great period of the *makaris* ("makers") is the period of the Scottish Chaucerians (c. 1475–1550). The chief pre-union poets are Gavin Douglas

In the next three sections the main doctrines of epistemology are set out, primarily on a notional rather than a chronological basis. Epistemological theories can be divided roughly into three groups according to whether, in the gaining of knowledge, they stress the role of (1) reason, (2) sense experience or (3) concept and language.

# RATIONALISM PRIOR TO KANT

**Classical Rationalism.** Though ancient Greek Rationalism was its first explicit expression in Plato's doctrine of Forms or Ideas, there have been earlier suggestions of Rationalism. The Greek philosophers had consciously set before themselves the task of understanding the world, primarily the physical world, and thus they interpreted to a large extent the world in terms of rationality. It was this that held within that world its permanent structure and order. This was to assume that it was possible to understand the world in terms of ordered and rational world. It was this that was seen clearly in many of the early fragments from the Greek writers. Thus, the philosopher and mathematician Pythagoras of Samos (flourished 6th century BC) thought that "all things are numbers". The monists thought that a generation after him, is by many scholars to have been a Rationalist. Certainly little later, Anaxagoras argued in Athens that *nous* (reason or intellect) was the original cause of movement in the universe. He described *nous* as "the thinnest of all things, pure, unmixed, and as abounding in knowledge of all things". Both Plato and Aristotle in the *Metaphysics* expressed the view that Anaxagoras made so little use of or notion of *nous* in his cosmology.

monotony of *ritus* in his cosmology.

*Theory of Forms in Plato.* In his theory of Forms, Ideas, Plato, no doubt influenced by Socrates, put forward the first fully explicit and systematic epistemology. Possibly the most striking description of Form and of the knowledge of it is to be found in the *Symposium*, in which it is said that man who has observed many beautiful objects and reflected about them may, of a sudden, glimpse supreme Beauty, an eternal, unproduced, indestructible – not beautiful in relation to time, a place, a thing, for a person but absolute Beauty. "All other things are beautiful through a participation in it." Along with the Form of Beauty go the Forms of Good and of the Just discussed in *The*

the Form of Beauty go Good and of the Just discussed in *The*

Pre-Socratic Rationalism

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up the peasantry in the late 12th century. The earliest English secular lyric extant was c. 1200; the earliest noted with music were "Mirie it is while sumer ilast," from about 1225, and the famous "Sumer is icumen in." From the mid-13th century on, lyric anthologies survived in fair number, the most famous being the "Harleian Miscellany," probably compiled 1330-40. Its contents are mixed, the same hand copying secular and religious pieces, verse and prose, French, Latin, and English.

Thus, the early Middle English period showed English literature being transformed by influences from the Continent, but gradually, and without losing its own identity.

## From Chaucer to the Renaissance

### POETRY: THE ALLITERATIVE TRADITION

The middle of the 14th century saw the beginning of a new fertility in the composition of long poems in an alliterative metre. Among the early group were very varied themes—love romances such as *William of Palerne* (before 1361); quasi-historical fragments on the life of Alexander; political satire such as *Wynnere and Waster*; and religious legend such as *Joseph of Arimathea* (c. 1350), treating of the Holy Grail. Surviving records give an impression that alliterative verse had suddenly been taken up again after a long interval, and the movement is generally called the alliterative revival. The differences from Old English technique were due largely to developments in the language, and the "revival" should therefore be seen as a striking expansion of an existing way of writing. It was a western and northern movement, contrasting with the rhyming technique widespread in London and the east. This kind of verse continued to be written in Scotland up to the early 16th century. There is a considerable volume of it, and the best work, all apparently 14th century, is equal to the best that Chaucer wrote. The "heroic romance" *Morte Arthure* is virile and noble and served as Sir Thomas Malory's model for part of his *Morte Darthur*. *Piers Plowman*, the earliest version c. 1370; attributed to William Langland, expressed in a complex allegory, with unique freshness, the author's faith in man's nobility and charity. The poem is long, and its language is of the



... poets, ...  
... 1425-1550), included the four makaris,  
... Robert Henryson, William Dun- or Scottish  
... Douglas, and Sir David Lyndsay. To them Chaucer-  
... it be added the author of *The Kingis Quair* (probab- ians  
... es I of Scotland), and the author of *Schir William*  
... lace (traditionally Harry the Minstrel, Blind Har-  
... tish poetry has never been so confident, dexterous,  
... varied as in the century that produced Henryson's  
... tament of Cressid, Dunbar's *Tale of the Marit Women and*  
... Wedo, Douglas' *Eneados*, and Lyndsay's dram-  
... *pyre of the Thrie Estatis*. The rough, precarious culture  
... that nourished this literature has often the appearance of  
... rejuvenated medievalism rather than of a premature  
... enaissance. What was not medieval was a keen linguis-  
... tic consciousness and a desire to expand the vernacular,  
... which followed the political self-determination of Scotland  
... in the 14th century. The elaborate style of the makaris  
... has been criticized as artificial and excessive; but such  
... excesses, which had their parallel in Elizabethan England,  
... were a necessary stage in the development of a literary  
... medium. Gavin Douglas, justifying his borrowings from  
... other tongues in his translation of Virgil, spoke of his  
... desire for "fourth (copiousness) of language." His powerful  
... descriptions burst with words and have a rich etymological  
... and idiomatic texture.

The makaris gained from Chaucer an ideal of poetic  
... utterance, a rhetoric or a diet of metrical forms like  
... the decasyllabic couplet. But here, too, this was only one  
... influence among many; others included the elements of  
... satire and fantasy (from roman *epic*), which had  
... always been strong in Scottish poetry. Both Chaucer and  
... Dunbar were connected with the court circles of their day  
... and addressed a courtly and educated audience; yet Dun-  
... bar as well as Gavin Douglas and Lyndsay had a good  
... deal of social give-and-take, perhaps not unexpected in a  
... small country that had been only partly and haphazardly  
... feudalized. "A man's a man for a' that" is a recurring  
... statement in Scottish literature.

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Julian of Norwich; and in such work as that of Nicholas Love, especially his translation (printed 1486) of the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* as *The Mirror of the Blessed Life of Jesus Christ*. Much of this prose is beautifully lucid, simple and easy in movement (some has a rhythmic cadence which removes it from the field of normal prose) but well before the 14th century ended plain prose began to be used for a much greater range of subject. John Wycliffe was the author or source of controversial works in which clarity of style matched vigour of thought, and, in addition, he inspired a great translation of the Bible, that known by his name. The later version, attributed to John Purvey, won great popularity, maintained until William Tyndale brought out his New Testament in 1526. Chaucer also wrote rather stiff prose in "The Tale of Melibee" and "The Parson's Tale," and his rendering of Boethius, while more important as a symptom of the trend of writing in his use of prose for a scientific purpose in *A Treatise on the Astrolabe*.

From the later 14th century, English prose came to be used for all kinds of secular purposes. John of Trevisa translated Ranulph Higden's universal history *Polychronicon* and a great 13th-century encyclopaedia, *De proprietatibus rerum*. There were several English versions of Mandeville's *Travels*, travellers' tales of the East, originally in French. Many chronicles of national and local affairs were written, including over 120 manuscripts of the *Brut*. Three translations of the 13th-century *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of anecdotes and tales, met a popular taste for stories. The style of such works was close to the language of conversation, and this is found again in private letters of which the collections of the Paston family of Norfolk is the best known. These were the first documents of their kind in English, and, although not literature in the ordinary sense, they give an intimate picture of the life of the time, the best showing a remarkable command of language. A comparable plainness and vigour characterized the remarkable autobiography of Margery Kempe, a mystic who, apparently illiterate, dictated an account of her religious experiences and pilgrimages.

The greatest writer of the century was Sir Thomas Malory, whose collection of Arthurian stories was printed by William Caxton in 1485. The title *Morte d'Arthur* (finished 1469-70) is French.



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re. "). Though contrasting in style (the *Katherine* Group being old-fashioned in diction and heavily alliterative, the *Ancrene Wisse* supple in style and language, including numerous French loanwords), they had in common the influence of continental thought.

**Verse.** For verse the range of genres was wider, and competition and influence from Latin and French traditions were more complex. Latin hymns had been current wherever the Roman Church had reached; and, with the patronage of secular literature in the hands of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, French verse flourished in post-Conquest England. The oldest and best manuscript of France's great early national epic, the *Chanson de Roland*, was Anglo-Norman. With many in England bilingual and some trilingual, Latin and French verse could not but affect English metres. By the late 12th century these influences had transformed English prosody. While Layamon's *Brut* used an irregular metre, a compromise between the Anglo-Saxon alliterative line and the French octosyllabic couplet, the *Ormulum*, a series of metrical homilies composed about the same time by Orm, used a 14-syllable line of Latin origin, with alliteration only for ornament and emphasis. *The Owl and the Nightingale* (late 12th century) used an adaptation of the commonest French metre, the octosyllabic couplet, soon to be established as the standard English metre for narrative and discursive writing, and the poem exhibited a poised acceptance of continental themes as well as forms: staging a debate between the two birds, the poet ranged over many topics—witchcraft, the church, and marriage—although whether the birds had any consistent symbolism is disputed. Much of the poem's merit lies in its diction: natural and lively, yet elegant.

Layamon's *Brut* contrasts with the *Owl* in every way. Translated from Wace's *Roman de Brut* (his translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin *History of the Kings of Britain*), it rendered its material in Anglo-Saxon heroic terms, suppressing the chivalric elements. Archaic even in its own time, the diction assimilated King Arthur to Germanic heroes. The first Arthurian work in English may have remained the only one toward the end of the



Layamon  
*Brut*

in the  
early Germanic  
English, Layamon's *Brut*  
until *Arthour and Merlin* appeared in the  
13th century.

As a bourgeois counterpart to the aristocratic Arthurian cycle stood the *Roman de Renart*, irreverent and satirical. How well this was known and appreciated in England is implied by widespread borrowing from it in carvings; but only one pre-Chaucerian tale, *The Fox and the Wolf*, has survived. In the same manuscript was *Dame Sirith*, the only pre-Chaucerian English representative of the realistic, usually verse fabliau.

Other narrative genres were amply represented. The verse romance was widely cultivated in English by the mid-13th century, the earliest substantial being probably *King Horn* (c. 1225). Most early romances in English seemed meant for popular rather than aristocratic audiences. *Havelok the Dane*, which told how a Danish prince in exile as a Grimsby fisherman's son regained his inheritance, gave a scullion's view of castle life and endowed its hero with working class virtues, while *Flouris and Blancheflur*, translated from a French tale of Oriental origin, excised sentimental embellishment so as to allow concentration on the plot. Within the romance genre was the "Breton lay," a tale of love and magic, often with a Celtic setting, as in the *Lais* of Marie de France. The most attractive English "Breton lay," *Sir Orfeo*, which retold the Orpheus legend in Celtic terms, is notable for the simple elegance of its structure and diction.

The most novel genre in early Middle English was the lyric. In Old English lyric metres were unknown, "Deor" and some of the *Charms* representing the nearest approach; nor did the dominant themes of love and spring time much concern Old English poets. In western Europe generally, the vernacular lyric began only in about 1100 with the work of the Provençal troubadours, but spread rapidly, appearing in English by the early 13th century. Before 1170 simple hymns were composed by St. Godric of Finchale, and, according to Giraldus Cambrensis, whose contemporary accounts are a valuable source for this period, dance songs with refrains were current among

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Everywhere from 1580 to 1600, and consistently thereafter, the nation found words for its love, wars and mad. The poems of men such as Lodge, Raleigh, Nicholas Breton, Watson, Nashe, Donne (in his earlier poem) and Constable are among the happiest and most durable monuments of the Renaissance in England. After 1600 disillusionment with the material prosperity of England, with the slack restraints of the Reformed Church, with certain Humanistic ideals influenced poetry deeply but there were few satirists concerned with the state of society. Wyatt had, as so often, shown the way and established the manner, but his successors in the 16th century were heavy-handed.

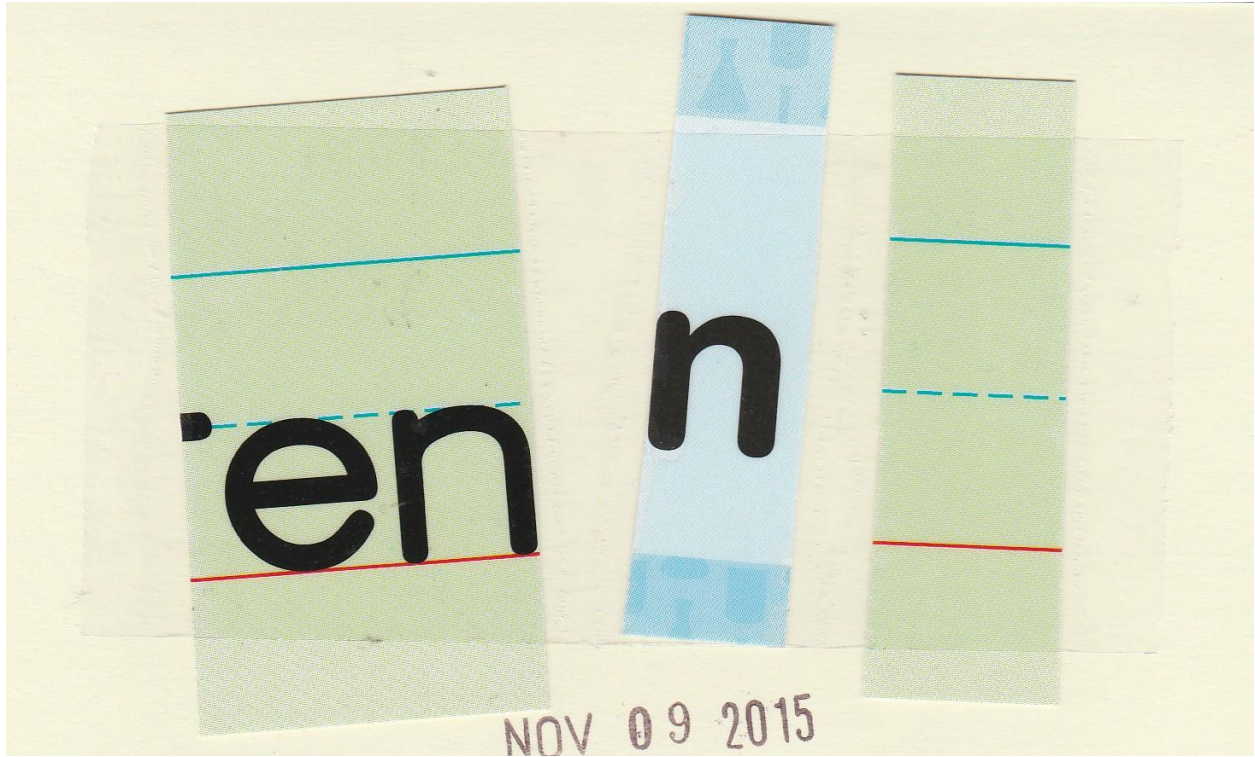
Despite the large number of writers who turned their hands to lyric and the chance of immortality, the general impression of Elizabethan verse of the great period is that it was uniformly high. No doubt the lyric became gradually overconventional, and its diction lost immediate force, yet at its matchless best it fittingly expressed the temper of Elizabethan England, half springtime and half golden age.

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN DRAMA

The transition from medieval drama. Out of the medieval morality play, with its edifying personification of vices and virtues, had grown up the shorter interlude, usually a debate in a realistic setting between characters representing different types or trades and often lightened by comic plays about a "vice" or incarnation of grotesque roguery. The value of the interlude was most clearly shown when its separate elements broke away to form new dramatic compounds. For instance, when the interlude dealt with issues such as man's duties to his king, it clearly involved affairs of state and suggested a possible way of writing a historical play. When it drew a moral lesson from the fall of a king or a great man through ill fortune, as retribution for ill deeds, it clearly approached different kinds of tragic pattern; yet if it showed the good reward and the wicked confounded, it was closer to comedy. The

interlude was a distant ancestor of the Machiavellian villain (such as Iago in *Othello*), the ogre-like villain (such as the scheming servant who





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